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A REVIEW OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF
FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS FROM 1828 TO 1860

By

Richard C. King

B.A., University of Montana, 1969

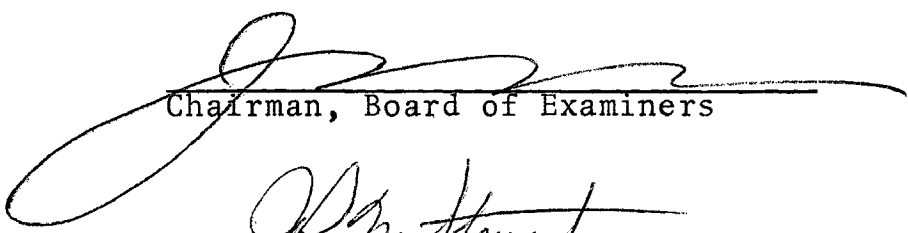
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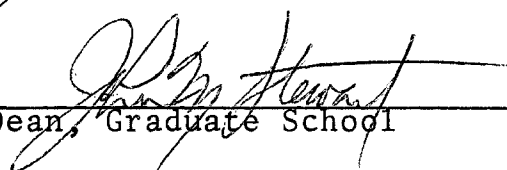
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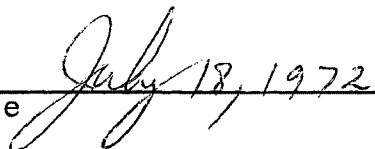


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The history of Franco-American relations from 1828 to 1860 presents an intriguing paradox to the student of international affairs. Only one issue during that period led to formal negotiations between French and American diplomats: the question of an indemnity for American spoliation claims resulting from French efforts to deprive Great Britain of the benefits of neutral trade during the Napoleonic Wars. But that dispute was minor, and in spite of Andrew Jackson's belligerency a settlement was reached in 1836. An issue of far greater importance to Franco-American relations existed beneath the surface of international affairs during the eighteen-thirties, and steadily developed until reaching a climax in the episode involving Maximilian and Carlotta during the eighteen-sixties. That issue centered around the connection between the Monroe Doctrine and American expansionism. As Americans began to view the west coast of North America and the Rio Grande as within the destiny of the United States, the government of Louis Philippe determined that the expansion of American republicanism was inimical to the interests of France in the New World. But at the same time, the ardent expansionists of the forties and the "Manifest Destiny"

advocates of the fifties were adamant that the United States could not allow a monarchial nation to prevent American dominance of the New World. Although Great Britain was the only nation capable of effectively challenging American power in the Western Hemisphere, France, in the view of many Americans, typified the contrast between the principles of the Old World and those of the New. Through historiographical analysis, this writer shall endeavor to shed some light upon Franco-American relations from the administration of Jackson to the eve of the American Civil War. From the outset, it will be apparent that French policy in the New World, as well as American attitudes towards France, were governed more by ideological considerations than by economic and strategic guidelines. In order to better understand this theme, it will be necessary to discuss its relation to the organization of this thesis.

The second chapter deals solely with the influence of various ideological precepts upon Franco-American relations. True, this topic will reappear throughout this work, for what the policy-makers of France and the United States viewed as the national interest was intimately related to ideological predilections. But a nation's commitment to a certain set of ideological principles is subject to change. Because France between 1828 and 1860 offers three examples of such a change--the revolution of 1830 and 1848, and the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon--the

primary purpose of this chapter will be to review the historiographical interpretations of the impact of these ideological transitions upon Franco-American relations.

The subject of the third chapter is the dispute between France and the United States that developed when Jackson set out to settle the long-standing question of the American spoliation claims. Because of the nature of Jackson's presidency, this writer will be concerned most with the effect of "Old Hickory's" diplomacy upon American opinion of France.

The next three chapters center around the one development that most hindered Franco-American amity prior to the Civil War--American expansionism. Of these, the fourth chapter is the most vital to the thesis. For it is in that chapter that the historiography of Franco-American relations with respect to American continental expansion is discussed. With the annexation of Texas, and the acquisition of California, Oregon, and the great Southwest by the United States, it became clear that the interests of France in the New World, as expressed by the government of Louis Philippe, clashed with the doctrine of American expansionism, as expressed so clearly by President James K. Polk. According to Albert K. Weinberg, this clash signified more than a competition for economic and strategic advantage. French attempts to establish sovereignty or political influence in adjacent countries seemed to many Americans to threaten

the very security of democracy. As he writes:

The expansionism of the 'forties arose as a defensive effort to forestall the encroachment of Europe in North America. So too, as one can see in the most numerous utterances, the conception of an "extension of the area of freedom" became general as an ideal of preventing absolutistic Europe from lessening the area open to American democracy; extension of the area of "freedom" was the defiant answer to extension of the area of "absolutism."¹

Weinberg has defined a basic issue in the historiography of Franco-American relations during the era of American continental expansion. Can the historian rely upon the accusations of French designs in the New World to evaluate Franco-American relations? In short, how accurate were the authors of those "numerous utterances" when they credited the government of Louis Napoleon with pursuing a policy inimical to the natural rights of the United States?

During the eighteen-fifties, French and American interests collided over the issues of the annexation of Hawaii and Cuba by the United States. In neither case did the annexation movement reach fruition. Hence the primary concern for historians is not whether accusations of French perfidy by advocates of the "Manifest Destiny" doctrine are to be believed, but whether French protests against the annexation of Cuba and Hawaii had any impact upon American policy-makers. These questions will be the topics of the fifth and sixth chapters.

¹Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), p. 109.

Civil War between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, as well as the question of a Central American canal route, presented further difficulties to French and American statesmen during the fifties. In Santo Domingo, Washington both competed with France for territorial concessions and cooperated with Paris and London in a joint effort at mediation. But never did the United States accuse either France or Britain of violating the Monroe Doctrine. The contrast between Cuba and Santo Domingo is obvious, and it presents an important issue to historians of Franco-American diplomatic relations. Although Napoleon III avoided involvement in the matter of a canal route, his attitudes toward the Clayton-Bulwer treaty and its aftermath displayed a definite policy towards the United States. Both Santo Domingo and the canal question will be the concern of the seventh chapter.

Throughout the period from 1828 to 1860, France often expressed her opposition to unlimited American expansion. The extension of American democracy especially offended the sensibilities of Louis Philippe and Napoleon III, but it was not until 1861 that France directly challenged the authority and predominance of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. Although the episode of Maximilian and Carlotta is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is clear that the roots of Napoleon's ill-considered venture are to be found in the evolution of Franco-American

relations from 1828 to 1860. A notable historian has attempted to define this evolution within the framework of the Monroe Doctrine. According to Dexter Perkins, the real meaning of Monroe's principles is to be found in the nineteenth-century struggle between democracy and older governmental forms. "The intervention of the French in Mexico," he writes, "is an episode of the first significance in the clash between the system of the Old World and the system of the New." Perkins regards the intervention in Mexico as inevitable--sooner or later, circumstances would permit the Monroe Doctrine to be challenged.² It is the purpose of this writer, then, to determine whether Perkins's interpretation can be used to explain Franco-American relations from 1828 to 1860.

²Dexter Perkins, A History of the Monroe Doctrine (2nd ed.: Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1955), pp. 108-109.

CHAPTER II

AMERICAN REPUBLICANISM AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONS OF 1830 AND 1848

Three years after President James K. Polk had accused French Premier Francois Guizot of advocating the application of the reactionary Old World principle of a balance of power to the New World, the July Monarchy fell. Soon after the success of the February revolution became known in the United States, Congress began debate on a congratulatory resolution. Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan, a Democrat, urged his colleagues to approve the measure as an expression of international republicanism. He suggested that the United States should congratulate the French people for the liberty they had recently acquired, and for the democratic principles they had established as the foundation of their new government. "We believe," Cass continued, "that our congratulations at this time will not only be acceptable to them, but useful to the great cause of freedom throughout the world." In response to skeptics who doubted the ability of the provisional government to establish a stable republic, Cass maintained that the United States must not ignore the bonds that united all those who resist oppression. The French people, he asserted,

have overturned the late Government and established one of their own, and with a spirit of wisdom and moderation which, under all the circumstances, has been rarely equalled in the World. The act of the Provisional Government--the temporary Fourth of July declaration, I may call it--of the French people lays down many of the just principles of human freedom, which will find a responsive echo in this country.¹

Cass was not mistaken when he claimed that the American people would react enthusiastically to the events in France. Most Americans, confident of their nation's reputation as the foremost example of the virtues of representative democracy--the sanctuary of liberty in an oppressed world--believed that the French revolutionaries had been inspired by the accomplishments of their republic and would try to emulate it.²

But the Second Republic did not survive. Only three years after the February revolution, France had again become an empire. This hasty transition from constitutional monarchy to republic to empire points out a central problem in Franco-American relations between 1828 and 1860. During all but three of those years, France was governed by a centralized leadership opposed to democratic reforms.

¹U.S. Congress, Senate, "Remarks by Cass on the Revolution in France," April 6, 1848, Congressional Globe, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Appendix, p. 465.

²John Gerow Gazley, American Opinion of German Unification, 1848-1871, Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, Vol. CXXI (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926).

Only during the brief interludes of the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 could Americans see a bond between their fundamental ideological precepts and those currently being professed by the French government. For most of period under discussion, then, there existed as ideological gap between the predominantly autocratic governments of France and the buoyant republicanism of the United States. As a result, the early days of the July Monarchy and the short life of the Second Republic are especially significant to the historian. The primary purpose of this chapter will be to examine the historiography of Franco-American relations at the times when the ideological differences between the two countries seemed to lessen. And because the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 failed to establish a permanent republic, it will also be necessary to determine what effect the defeat of French liberalism had upon American opinion of France.

Although this writer will be most concerned with American opinion of the July Monarchy and the Second Empire and how this was related to the failure of the 1830 and 1848 attempts at republicanism, he will also attempt to characterize briefly the sentiments of Louis Philippe and Napoleon III with respect to the United States. Unfortunately, there are only two authors who attempt a general review of the relation of ideology to French attitudes toward the United States. Hence, it is the intention of this writer to provide a background to French foreign policy that will

be useful in the succeeding chapters.

Historians are in general agreement regarding the initial American reaction to the February revolution. The numerous professions of American sympathy for that event attracted the attentions of four early historians and, for the most part, their descriptions of the public response within the United States towards the establishment of the Second Republic have stood intact. Explaining the enthusiastic welcome given the Hungarian patriot, Louis Kossuth, when he arrived in the United States in 1852, all four historians point to the French revolution of 1848 and its impact upon American opinion. James Ford Rhodes offers a typical explanation of Kossuth's popularity. The splendid testimonial given Kossuth, Rhodes writes, "was not so much to the man as to the principle of which he was the incarnation." Rhodes notes that the various revolutions that swept Europe during 1848 had been followed with deep interest in the United States--American newspapers had been replete with accounts of the downfall of the hated monarchies. As a result, he continues, Americans

. . .of this time had correct knowledge of contemporary events in Europe. These revolutionary movements seemed to them due to American example; the contemplation of the free, united, and happy country created a yearning, they thought, for the like, and this yearning stirred up the people on the European continent to rebel against the tyrants. Never had there been a more unquestioned faith in our institutions, a greater desire to propagate the principles underlying them, or a more sublime

confidence in their virtue.³

According to Rhodes, who is representative of his contemporaries, Americans embraced the cause of the February revolution not only because they too detested monarchy, but also out of pride. They saw in the uprisings against oppression a fervent desire to imitate American institutions. It should be noted that although Rhodes presents sufficient evidence to establish that Americans did assume that the revolutionaries of 1848 sought to utilize the United States as a model for their new governments, he neglects to demonstrate that this assumption was accurate.

By means of an impressive statistical analysis of the French Assembly of 1848, Eugene N. Curtis demonstrates that the American example did not provide a model for the new French constitution. To be sure, Curtis notes, Minister Richard Rush's early recognition of the new government made a favorable impression on the French rebels. Polk's official expression of sympathy, as well as offers of assistance from Congress, further enhanced the United States

³James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850, Vol. I (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1893), p. 233. Rhodes's contemporaries who also noted the keen American response to the February revolution were H. Von Holst, The Constitutional and Political History of the United States, Vol. IV (Chicago: Callaghan, 1885), p. 65; James Schouler, History of the United States of America Under the Constitution, Vol. V: Free Soil Controversy, 1847-1861 (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1891), pp. 226-234; John Bach McMaster, History of the People of the United States, Vol. VIII (New York: Appleton and Co., 1913), pp. 143-157.

in the eyes of the French.⁴ But contrary to the beliefs of the enthusiastic Americans, Curtis asserts that the United States presented an imperfect example of democratic government to French republicans, radical democrats, and socialists--the most crucial elements within the 1848 assembly.

It is significant, Curtis states, that only the deposed Orleanists endorsed the American example wholeheartedly. Because they were equally hostile to an absolute king and absolute democracy, "they sought support for their plutocratic interests in an upper chamber, of non-hereditary character. Their strength lay in the upper middle-class, the great financial interests which had dominated the late regime; they had prospered by economic individualism and were willing to show enthusiasm for any political system that would protect and leave them alone."⁵ The Orleanists, Curtis continues, received support from French liberals, the best example being Alexis de Tocqueville. In his Démocratie en Amérique, Tocqueville had expressed his admiration for the American system of checks and balances, local self-government, the independent authority of the judiciary, and the federal scheme in general--all the more

⁴Eugene N. Curtis, The French Assembly of 1848 and American Constitutional Doctrine, Columbia University Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, Vol. LXXIX (New York: Columbia University Press, 1918), pp. 75-96.

⁵Ibid., pp. 329-330.

conservative and orderly aspects of American society. In the preface to an 1848 edition of his famous work, Tocqueville reaffirmed his adherence to a "'tranquil republic.'" In essence, the liberals, although desirous of reform, abhorred revolution and sought orderly legal political change.⁶ But the admiration expressed by the Orleanists and the liberals for the American example failed to guide the French Assembly in its search for a new constitution. According to Curtis, this was primarily due to the contrast between the ideals and realities of American life.

Although the Assembly expressed nearly unanimous admiration for the American ideal, French attitudes towards the American example were at first ambivalent, and as the revolution progressed toward the fateful June Days, became increasingly hostile. The American ideal, epitomized in the French mind by George Washington, received broad approval and adulation. Nearly all Frenchmen, Curtis maintains, had a deep respect for the accomplishments of the early republic.⁷ But when viewed as a model for France, the American political system as it had evolved by 1848 seemed to many, especially the more radical, to be far from the ideal.

⁶Ibid., pp. 97-99. A good recent description of French liberalism during the July Monarchy and the Revolution of 1848 is found in George Fasel's Europe in Upheaval: The Revolutions of 1848 (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1970) pp. 20-26.

⁷Curtis, The French Assembly, p. 106.

Critics of the United States pointed to the Mexican War and to the presidential election of 1848 as examples of the pervasiveness of American militarism. Slavery and materialism were also assailed.⁸ As the influence of the French left in the Assembly increased, the persuasiveness of the American example declined.⁹ Americans began to become aware of this when the provisional government established its experimental workshops. It became obvious during the socialist upheaval of June.

In a later article, Curtis maintains that most Americans responded with praise not only to the February revolution, but to the Revolution of 1830 as well. Although there were reservations, primarily from experienced statesmen overwhelmingly voiced approval of the downfalls of Charles X and Louis Philippe. He adds, however, that in both instances this initial euphoria soon disappeared. Five years after the establishment of the constitutional monarchy of Louis Philippe, the United States and France seemed on the verge of war over the claims controversy. It had become apparent to most Americans that Orleanist France, in spite of its republican format, differed greatly from the revolutionary promise of 1830. It took even less

⁸Ibid., pp. 110-114. Both Lewis Cass, the Democratic nominee, and Zachary Taylor, the Whig, were former generals.

⁹Ibid., pp. 326-328.

time for Americans to become disillusioned with the Second Republic. The tendency of the new government toward socialistic experiment affronted American sensibilities. And when later the revolutionary assembly abolished slavery in French colonies, the tone of American criticism became more embittered, Curtis concludes. Nevertheless, the Second Republic soon cast off its socialist associations and settled down to a bourgeois conservatism, quieting somewhat its American critics. Only with the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon did Americans, according to Curtis, finally resign themselves to the failure of French liberalism. The replacement of the imperfect but tolerable Second Republic by an empire seemed needless to Americans and ran counter to their traditional sympathy for the republican form of government.¹⁰

Curtis's article is important in that he suggests the general nature of American opinion toward the transitory French political scene. His dependence upon a few of the more articulate expressions of American opinion, such as the correspondence of intellectuals, official statements, and prominent newspapers, can be excused since he has confined himself to a brief article. A more complete review of the broad spectrum of American opinion is found

¹⁰Curtis, "American Opinion of the French Nineteenth Century Revolutions," American Historical Review, XXIX (January, 1921), pp. 254-255.

in John Gerow Gazley's study of the American attitude toward the unification of Germany. Impressed by the lack of American sympathy for France in 1871, Gazley devotes a long chapter to American opinion of France from 1848 to 1871.

Gazley agrees with Curtis that the abolition of slavery and the socialistic tendencies of the Second Republic were somewhat offset by the restoration of order in the summer of 1848. "Many Americans believed that the republic had been greatly strengthened by the defeat of the rebels," Gazley writes, "and that henceforth its chances for success were vastly improved."¹¹ But unlike Curtis, Gazley maintains that on the eve of Napoleon's coup, widespread skepticism toward the Second Republic had developed in the United States. By then, Americans had come to believe that the revolution was the "work of idealists, socialists, and radicals, whose impracticable ideas very naturally culminated in the bloody June uprisings in Paris." Hence, Gazley writes, "it came to be thought that the French people were unfit for republican institutions." The election of Louis Napoleon to the presidency further demonstrated the incapacity of the French people for self-government. Following an extensive review of newspapers and a variety of personal memoirs,

¹¹Gazley, American Opinion of German Unification, pp. 244-247.

Gazley asserts that Napoleon's "character, his policies as president, and the people who had elected him were all held in contempt if not hatred by the American people." Still, thoughtful Americans could not ignore the fact that Napoleon had been overwhelmingly elected by the French people. Because of this, Gazley concludes, until the coup d'état the general American attitude towards Napoleon was ambivalent.¹²

According to Gazley, the American reaction to the coup d'état of December 2, 1851, was characterized by bitter disappointment. He writes:

It is true that many Americans were very much disillusioned about the ability of the French people to establish really republican institutions on the American model, but it is also true that the violent overthrow of the Second Republic, unpopular as it had become in the United States, was received by most Americans with an outburst of indignation.

To be sure, Gazley notes, a few Americans believed that the French people had received a just reward. Some also expressed a grudging admiration for Napoleon's boldness and initiative. Still, he writes, "the feeling in the United States was none the less bitter against the author of the coup d'état."¹³ Not surprisingly, there was much opposition against American recognition of the new government. The

¹²Ibid., pp. 243-244, 251-255.

¹³Ibid., pp. 257-260.

American minister at Paris, William Cabell Rives, reported the coup to his Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, adding that the United States might express her dissatisfaction by refusing recognition. Gazley quotes Webster as replying: "'You sympathize, in this respect, with the great body of your countrymen . . . if the French people have now, substantially, made another change, we have no choice but to acknowledge that also.'"14

But although Americans generally condemned Louis Napoleon and his coup d'état, Gazley believes that until the Maximilian affair certain considerations mitigated their animosity. There was a growing admiration, he claims, of Napoleon's great intellectual and administrative abilities. "Perhaps it might be fair to say," Gazley writes, "that before 1862 most Americans hated and yet respected Napoleon III." Furthermore, in spite of the fact that the great majority of Americans judged the Second Empire to be autocratic, Gazley adds that the regime "was based on the vote of the French people, a vote so overwhelming that it could not have been effected by any amount of intimidation or bribery." Consequently, there existed a considerable minority of intelligent Americans who believed that the essence of Louis Napoleon's government was indeed democratic.¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid., p. 262.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 271-278.

It should be evident that any attempt to analyze American public opinion with the hope of reaching some generalizations is unavoidably plagued by the great diversity of popular spokesmen. Gazley manages to make some generalizations regarding American attitudes toward the Second Republic and Napoleon III, but they are qualified by the inclusion of opposing views. Thus, we are told that Americans both admired and condemned Napoleon III, that various newspapers and individuals at once viewed the Second Empire as autocratic and democratic. This, of course, reflects Gazley's extensive researches. But because he strives to present the broad spectrum of American opinion of France accurately, Gazley leaves us in some doubt regarding the impact of these attitudes upon Franco-American relations. Elizabeth Brett White makes a conscious effort to avoid such ambiguity. Using similar evidence, she attempts to clarify the ultimate effect of American opinion of both the revolution of 1830 and the reign of Louis Napoleon upon United States relations with France.

White agrees with Curtis that the relations of the United States with the new government of Louis Philippe opened most auspiciously. Americans, she states, saw much to applaud in the Orleans monarchy. In the first place, it was headed by a man whose temperament and prior experience--Philippe, during an earlier visit to the United States had expressed his admiration for the American system

of government--indicated a loyalty to democratic ideals. Also, the new government had been sponsored by the Marquis de Lafayette, whom Americans claimed as one of their own national heroes. Hence, White concludes, "France was deemed to have advanced materially toward the status of a self-governing state." But in spite of this ideologically inspired congeniality, relations between France and the United States soon soured. Like Curtis, White credits French intransigence over the claims controversy as the primary reason. As the Paris government continued to debate whether to honor the legitimate American claims for indemnity, it became evident, White asserts, "that the Revolution of 1830, if it had brought into being a constitutional state, had not created a harmonious one."¹⁶ White concludes that this early American prejudice against the reign of Louis Philippe remained a problem in Franco-American relations until the Revolution of 1848.¹⁷

In White's view, the failure of the Second Republic reaffirmed the popular view that the French were not suited to democratic principles. She agrees with Gazley that the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon provoked condemnation from the American press; but unlike Gazley, White avoids entanglement in the confusing aspects of American opinion of Napoleon III.

¹⁶Elizabeth Brett White, American Opinion of France From Lafayette to Poincaré (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), pp. 93-94.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 119.

Instead, she emphasizes the impact of American disillusionment over the defeat of French republicanism upon Franco-American relations. She writes:

With such an impression of the French nature prevalent, it was perhaps not to be expected that the Americans should show any marked friendliness toward their "ancient ally" in political affairs. Nor, on the other hand, since the character and the government of the French were obviously their own affair, was there any cause for active antagonism, unless in a specific instance the welfare of the United States should be threatened.¹⁸

During the fifties, then, Americans resigned themselves to the failure of French liberalism; not until Napoleon's Mexican adventure did they openly condemn the emperor.

The works of Gazley and White, when used to supplement Curtis's brief article, make for a coherent and well-documented study of the American attitude toward the traumas of French politics. Their influence over subsequent students has been potent. Writing on James Buchanan's term as Polk's Secretary of State, St. George Leakin Sioussat, for example, is content merely to list a few of the more obvious factors which stirred the enthusiasm with which Americans greeted the February revolution. Certainly the comparative bloodlessness of the revolution contributed to American sympathy for the French rebels. Americans also remembered the alliance with France during their own revolution. But of greater importance, Sioussat writes, was the

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 271-278.

pleasure of witnessing the fall of the double-dealing ministry of Louis Philippe, "and the substitution thereof of a republic which, it was hoped, would be like our own." Sioussat further agrees with Gazley and White, as well as Curtis, that this initial enthusiasm was soon dampened by the appearance of socialistic experiment and the abolition of slavery in the French colonies.¹⁹

In a lucid and provocative article, Merle Curti suggests that much of the sympathy within America for the revolutions of 1848 arose from a national myopia--a proud and artificial belief in the justice of the American political system. Troubled by the nagging social enigma of institutionalized slavery, Americans misinterpreted the revolutions of 1848 as a reaffirmation of their fundamental political ideology. Curti writes:

Pride in the apparent imitation of American republican institutions further explained the enthusiasm in every part of the land. Republicanism was commonly believed to be not only a necessary ingredient of American civilization, but of civilization itself. It was easy to overlook the relation between prosperity and virgin resources and to attribute the national success to political institutions alone. With a marked self-consciousness and faith in republican ideas, destined it was felt to become universal, what was more natural than for Americans to sympathize with peoples trying to break the chains of despots and set up republics on the American model?²⁰

¹⁹St. George Leakin Sioussat, "James Buchanan," in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, ed. by Samuel F. Bemis, Vol. V (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), pp. 300-301.

²⁰Merle Curti, "The Impact of the Revolutions of 1848

Although Curti's article is well documented, it would be extremely difficult to substantiate the above. But his idea is none the less valuable, for it explains why Americans misunderstood the full meaning of the February revolution. Only a few intellectuals detected the economic and social forces that would soon come to the fore. Because most Americans, as Curti writes, "looked on the upheavals as moral struggles for abstract political rights"--the same political rights which had been secured in the United States--disillusionment over the failure of the Second Republic was widespread.²¹ In effect, Curti's thoughtful essay does much to reaffirm what Gazley and White have written about the popular American belief that Frenchmen were not capable of republican government.

Curtis and Gazley suggest that although Americans became disillusioned with French liberalism after the June Days and the election of Louis Napoleon, American opinion of the new president was ambivalent. One reason for this may have been Napoleon's sudden decision to settle the Poussin affair. Writing on John Middleton Clayton's career as Secretary of State, Mary W. Williams stresses the significance of this relatively minor incident to the

on American Thought," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. XCIII, No. 3 (June, 1949), p. 210.

²¹Ibid., pp. 210-211.

relations of the United States with the ministry of Louis Napoleon.

The affair began innocuously when Guillaume Tell Poussin, the French minister to Washington in 1849, presented a minor claim to Clayton on behalf of a French national. Poussin's belligerent language, however, offended Clayton and President Taylor, and they retaliated with the threat of registering an official protest against the minister. Poussin retreated, but not for long. Again over an insignificant issue, Poussin insulted the American government. Incensed, Taylor instructed Rush in Paris to protest, hoping that Poussin would be recalled. Tocqueville, then the French Foreign Minister, replied that Clayton had used undiplomatic language, and intimated that Poussin would be retained. Clayton, who had appointed Rives to succeed Rush, again protested and announced that Poussin would be dismissed. Meanwhile, Tocqueville had named a successor to Poussin, and was naturally offended when he read Clayton's note. He in turn demanded an explanation of Washington's antagonism towards Poussin. The comic opera had come to the point that the administration regarded war with France as not improbable. But when Rives arrived in Paris, Napoleon received him cordially, and tensions finally relaxed. According to Williams, Napoleon earnestly desired to cultivate good relations with the United States.

At the time, the new president was deeply involved in European politics--he could not afford to allow the Poussin affair to harm his relations with the United States, already dulled by the failure of the February revolution.²² Two biographers of Taylor, Brainerd Dyer and Holman Hamilton, agree with Williams that Napoleon's initiative in ending the Poussin affair mended what could have been a serious breach in Franco-American relations. After the reception given Rives, Americans could at least view the Second Republic as compatible with the United States.²³

To this point, this writer has been concerned primarily with the historiography of American response to the vicissitudes of French politics. It has been clearly shown that when the revolution of 1848 failed to emulate the American example, the public reaction in the United States was largely one of disillusionment, disappointment, and finally, with Napoleon's takeover, resignation. Only White, however, attempts to assess the impact upon diplomatic relations of this frustration of American hopes for French

²²Mary W. Williams, "John Middleton Clayton," in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, ed. by Samuel F. Bemis, Vol. VI (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), pp. 187-190.

²³See Brainerd Dyer, Zachary Taylor (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946), p. 352; Holman Hamilton, Zachary Taylor: Soldier in the White House, Vol. II (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1951), pp. 187-190.

liberalism, and her conclusions are but speculation. The students of the Poussin affair have suggested that Louis Napoleon made a concerted effort to improve his relations with the United States, but they fail to determine for how long this consideration guided the emperor's diplomacy. In a recent monograph, Henry Blumenthal attempts to rectify this ambiguity by reviewing not only American opinion of French politics, but official French opinion of the United States as well. It is with the latter that Blumenthal makes a definite contribution to the historiography of Franco-American relations. His findings provide an essential background to the study of the diplomatic relations between Paris and Washington from 1828 to 1860. Because for only three of those thirty-two years was France governed by a republic, Blumenthal centers upon the attitudes of the governments of Louis Philippe and Napoleon III toward the United States.

According to Blumenthal, the leaders of both the July Monarchy and the Second Empire feared a resurgence of republican spirit during their reigns. Dedicated to European monarchism, both governments felt uneasy over the possibility that the French republican movement might be so impressed by the success of the American republic that the idea to establish such a system in France could gain momentum. Hence, Blumenthal adds, they regarded it "as a

serious challenge that the United States lent at least its moral support to the republican movement in Europe, and that some Americans actually aided and assisted it." In meeting this supposed threat, the two governments became even more entrenched in opposition to American expansion. Blumenthal writes:

. . .the French monarchs did not only attempt to control republican activities at home and to deny the superiority of republican institutions, but they also pursued policies designed to frustrate the success of the American republic and to arouse the suspicions of the Latin Americans against the United States.²⁴

In Blumenthal's view, then, the desire of the July Monarchy to contain American continental expansion was ideologically inspired. Louis Philippe, and his chief minister, Guizot, equated the national interest of France with the prevention of the spread of republicanism. Napoleon III, however, initially desired to avoid difficulties with the sensitive Americans.²⁵ Nevertheless, Blumenthal asserts that hope for any real improvement in Franco-American relations during the Second Empire was illusory.

Blumenthal maintains that Napoleon and his advisors misunderstood the vigor of American culture. Although the imperial family refrained from expressing anti-republican antipathies, Franco-American tensions were destined to

²⁴Henry Blumenthal, A Reappraisal of Franco-American Relations, 1830-1871 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 4.

develop. He writes:

Applying the standards of an ancient civilization to the young American nation, they completely failed to understand the spirit that moved the society of pioneers in the New World. Napoleon and Eugénie were accustomed to think in terms of the glory of France, the desirability of a powerful state, special rights and privilege for a top layer of society, and the vital importance of the cultural and intellectual aspects of life. American concepts and practices conflicted too much with these ideas to be appreciated by the French rulers and many citizens of France.²⁶

With the royal family harboring such prejudices, it was inevitable that they would eventually be manifested.

Blumenthal suggests that the "Young America" movement provided the necessary catalyst.

"Young America" began its activities as a recognized political group during the presidential campaign of 1852. Led by such men as George N. Sanders of Kentucky and Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, the "Young Americans" actively supported the candidacy of the Democratic nominee, Franklin K. Pierce. During the campaign, the aims of this ebullient movement became clear. According to Blumenthal, not only did their goals offend Napoleon III, but the "Young Americans" also held a particularly bitter resentment against the new emperor. He writes:

²⁶Ibid., pp. 24-25.

The supporters of the "Young America" movement, a group of militant democrats who advocated active intervention in behalf of European liberals, did not hide their contempt for the emperor. A prosperous French republic would have made an ideal spearhead of republicanism in the midst of monarchical Europe. The rise of this new "despot" frustrated the international aspirations of "Young America," ever anxious to promote the spread of constitutional liberties beyond the seas.²⁷

With Pierce's election, it appeared to many Europeans that the "Young America" spirit would settle in the White House. An early student of the movement, Merle Curti, notes that the reaction of the conservative French press to Pierce's victory was nervous.²⁸ Blumenthal agrees, concluding that in conservative French circles--which, of course, included the royal family--the United States earned a reputation "as the enfant terrible, against which European society must protect itself." Secretary of State William L. Marcy's denial of any intention on the part of the United States to export American political doctrines did little to allay these apprehensions.²⁹

Assuming that if the July Monarchy and the Second Empire

²⁷Ibid., pp. 25-26. See also Merle Curti, "Young America," American Historical Review, XXXII (October, 1926), pp. 35-45. For Douglas's relationship with "Young America," see George Fort Milton, The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1935), pp. 6, 80-82, 92-97.

²⁸Curti, "Young America," pp. 46-47.

²⁹Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, pp. 26-29.

had been replaced by a republic, Franco-American relations would have been less troubled, Blumenthal maintains that Louis Philippe and Louis Napoleon allowed their ideological predilections to govern their relations with the United States. As a result, Americans viewed French desires to limit the expansion of the United States as a threat to the freedom and security of their republic.³⁰ In an extensive review of French opinion of the United States from 1815 to 1852, René Rémond agrees with Blumenthal that both Louis Philippe and Napoleon deeply distrusted the United States. He further suggests, however, that French suspicion of the American republic went beyond the personal prejudices of the King and the Emperor.

According to Rémond, the traditional friendship between the peoples of France and the United States began to deteriorate during the Jacksonian Era. After the Revolution of 1830, Frenchmen, encouraged by the progress of popular government in their country, undertook the task of rediscovering America. Rémond maintains that they were disillusioned and confused by what they saw. It became apparent to them that the America of Jackson bore little resemblance from afar to that of Jefferson, Madison, Franklin, and Washington. Slavery had become a pervasive institution; "Yankee" influence encompassed all walks of life; and

³⁰Ibid., p. 31.

Virginians were no longer the typical Americans.³¹ The continental expansion of the United States, Rémond continues, increased French criticism of the bumptious, self-confident republic. As a result, many of the motives behind Napoleon's adventure in Mexico were not peculiar to that monarch, but had begun to appear throughout the spectrum of French opinion by the early forties. Distrust of Anglo-Saxons, Latinism, affinity with the Spanish, the idea of raising up a community of Latin and Catholic civilization to oppose the menacing expansion of North American power--all, Rémond maintains, took their roots from widespread French disillusionment over the fate of the American ideal, and resentment with regard to the impetuous expansionism of the forties.³²

True, Blumenthal and Rémond are hardly impartial in their interpretations. Blumenthal seems unable to surmount the American distaste for the instability of French politics and monarchical governments, while Rémond is in sympathy with the contemporary French criticism of the faults of the American system and appears to feel that the United States was ungrateful towards a former ally. And yet, Rémond and Blumenthal point out an essential ingredient in Franco-American relations between the Revolution of 1830 and the

³¹Rene Remond, Les Etats-Unis Devant l'Opinion Francaise, 1815-1852, Vol. II (Paris: A. Colin, 1962), pp. 826-827.

³²Ibid., pp. 821-822.

Civil War. From their different perspectives, both suggest that an ideological bond between French and American society simply did not exist. While Blumenthal emphasizes that the primary cause of this gap was the distrust with which Louis Philippe and Napoleon III regarded American republicanism, Rémond points instead to the development of a nativist America unfamiliar to the French and replete with internal problems that did not exist during the early years of the republic. But what is important is not that they differ in assessing a cause, but that they agree as to its effect. Rhodes, Gazley, and White have shown that Americans interpreted the revolutions of 1848 as attempts to emulate the United States and its institutions. This explains much of the enthusiasm with which Americans reacted to the upheavals of 1848, but, as Curtis has established from his extensive research into French sources, the French Assembly rejected the American example. Curti asserts that Americans in their expressions of sympathy for the French revolutionaries not only misunderstood the full meaning of the February revolution, but that they also suffered from a national myopia which deluded them into thinking that their political institutions were requisite to the success of any nation. So, in spite of the blossoming of international republican spirit that occurred with the downfall of the July Monarchy, relations between France and the United States were only

temporarily improved through ideological ties. With the June Days and the election of Napoleon to the presidency of the Second Republic, Franco-American ideological unity began to wither; three years later with the coup d'etat of December, 1851, it died. The resulting chasm between "Young America" and Napoleon III was wide indeed.

Although most of the historiography reviewed to this point is dominated by generalization and speculation--often of such a nature that it frustrates critical analysis--it is essential as a background for the subsequent chapters. Unless we understand the general trend of Franco-American ideological relations, it will be difficult to follow the historiography of the diplomatic relations between Paris and Washington from 1828 to 1860. Obviously, ideological predilections influence the definition of national interest. It will be a fundamental purpose of the succeeding chapters to determine what impact the ideologically inspired American distrust of the July Monarchy and the Second Empire had on Franco-American relations.

CHAPTER III

THE FRENCH DEBT QUESTION AND JACKSONIAN DIPLOMACY

Prior to the declaration of war in 1812, American merchants had suffered heavy losses not only from the British Orders in Council, but also from the French Berlin and Milan Decrees. In 1814, the Treaty of Ghent brought an end to hostilities, but the question of the commercial depredations carried out by the French remained. Hoping to secure an indemnity for American claims against France, President James Madison appointed Albert Gallatin to be the American minister at Paris. Gallatin and his successors negotiated with the French government over the claims issue, but to no avail. Although the government of Charles X never denied the justice of the American claims, it repeatedly delayed discussions of a possible settlement. In 1829, the American claims remained unfulfilled.¹

With the inauguration of Andrew Jackson, however, the claims issue became a prime concern of the foreign relations of the United States. The new president mentioned the problem in his first annual message, and instructed William

¹See Richard A. McLemore, Franco-American Relations, 1816-1836 (University: Louisiana State University Press, 1941), pp. 1-42. McLemore is the only author who has reviewed these futile negotiations.

Cabell Rives at Paris to renew negotiations. But when Rives met with Prince Auguste J.A.M. de Polignac, the French Foreign Minister, he was told that France was unwilling to recognize the American claims and was reluctant to negotiate. Jackson refused to allow the French to continue to delay, and pressed for a settlement. But Paris again avoided serious negotiations; not until the Revolution of 1830 did a climate conducive to a settlement begin to form.²

Most Americans greeted the new government of Louis Philippe enthusiastically, viewing the revolution as a victory for popular government. As a result of the improved relations between France and the United States, a settlement of the claims issue was reached on July 4, 1831, when the July Monarchy agreed to pay an indemnity to satisfy the American claimants. But due to the reluctance of the Chamber of Deputies to appropriate the necessary funds, execution of the treaty was delayed. Although Jackson demanded payment, the Chamber continued to postpone action. Incensed, Jackson decided that diplomacy was futile, that only a threat of reprisals would persuade France to meet her obligations and begin payment. On the eve of Jackson's annual message of 1834, Rives, the former minister to France, visited the White House, hoping to obtain a copy

²Ibid., pp. 58-70.

of the forthcoming speech. He found the general busily engaged in rewriting his declaration. "'I know them French,'" Jackson is reputed to have said, "'they won't pay unless they're made to.'"³

The next day Jackson brought the claims issue to a head. If the French continued to ignore their treaty commitments, Jackson warned, the United States would take "redress in our hand."⁴ Obviously, Jackson's speech is crucial to the historiography of the claims dispute. In the preceeding chapter, it was noted that the animosity caused by the claims controversy contributed to the deepening American disillusionment with the July Monarchy. But, and this is a vital question, did Jackson's vigorous pursuit of the much-delayed indemnity reflect a popular demand for settlement, a determination of the American people that they would no longer be trifled with, or did it represent yet another example of the belligerency of "Old Hickory?" In short, it is important that historians determine whether the deterioration of Franco-American relations during the claims dispute was caused by public opinion of France or by the attitude of one man toward "them French."

³Quoted in White, American Opinion of France, pp. 95-96.

⁴The best review of Jackson's speech is found in McLemore, Franco-American Relations, pp. 130-133.

The furor that engulfed the relatively minor issue of the French spoliation claims first attracted the attention of Charles H. Peck. In his 1899 study of the Jacksonian Era, Peck tends to favor the Whig point of view. For that reason, he emphasizes the role of Jackson's personality in the claims crisis. When Washington learned that the French Chambers had refused to appropriate the necessary funds to meet the requirements of the 1831 treaty, Peck writes, "Jackson was wroth." In his annual message of 1834, Peck continues, Jackson recommended reprisals if at the next session of the Chambers no provision was made for the payment of the debt. "The activities of the President," Peck writes, "created alarm throughout the country, for France would undoubtedly view it as virtually a recommendation of war."⁵

According to Peck, Jackson's irrational fulmination offended France and provoked a needless crisis in Franco-American relations. Fortunately, he adds, the refusal of the Senate to approve an administration measure providing appropriations for the fortification of coastal defenses, tempered the militancy of Jackson's words in the eyes of the French. Ignoring the partisan nature of Jackson's opposition in the Senate, Peck lauds the reasonableness of

⁵Charles H. Peck, The Jacksonian Epoch (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899), pp. 248-250.

Henry Clay, the Whig spokesman. After the Senate rejected the fortification bill, he writes,

The French Chambers passed a bill appropriating the amount of the indemnity, but with the proviso that it would not be paid until their government had received a satisfactory explanation of that part of the President's message which recommended reprisals--that is to say, until he apologized for his belligerent affront to the dignity of France.

To be sure, Peck does not absolve the French of all blame for the crisis created by Jackson's 1834 message. "If Jackson had been a little less vigorous," he writes, "and if the French government had been as regardful of its obligation as of its settlement, there would have been no rupture. As it was the rupture was now complete." Only a fortuitous offer of mediation from a concerned government in Great Britain, Peck concludes, allowed a settlement to be reached.⁶

Significantly, Peck's documentation gives us an insight into his interpretation of the claims dispute. Throughout his study of the Jacksonian Era, Peck depends heavily upon the Congressional Globe. Regarding the spoliation issue, then, Peck bases his views on Jackson's annual message of 1834 and the subsequent Congressional debate. Later authors have supplemented this message and the related discussion

⁶Ibid., pp. 265-266. According to Charles Webster, the claims quarrel disturbed the British, for London feared that France might find it necessary to defend its honor in the face of Jackson's insulting language. Charles Webster, "British Mediation Between France and the United States in 1834-1836," English Historical Review, XLII (January, 1927), pp. 60-62.

in Congress with at least cursory examinations of newspaper opinion and diplomatic correspondence. Peck's failure to use such material, coupled with his Whiggish sympathies, leads him to conclude that during the claims dispute, Jackson acted precipitously and without public backing. For Peck, the spoliation crisis was animated by the flamboyant, irresponsible politics of the Democratic president.

Unlike Peck, John Spencer Bassett credits Jackson with having much popular support for his initial attempts to solve the claims issue. In his view, the signing of the 1831 treaty was an example "of Jackson's just but vigorous methods of clearing our diplomacy of old issues." Americans had long desired a settlement of the claims question, and were therefore impressed by Jackson's success in persuading the government of Louis Philippe to pay an indemnity. Bassett asserts, however, that the reluctance of the French Chambers to appropriate the funds necessary to fulfill the treaty obligation did not warrant Jackson's decision to threaten reprisals. For although the 1834 message "showed the people they faced a crisis and made the world see that the supineness of American diplomacy was past," opinion, especially in the Senate, but throughout the nation as well, slowly sobered. Nevertheless, Jackson's refusal to apologize to France for his threat of

reprisals had broad support. Bassett writes:

The message of 1834 was, in fact, needlessly strong. Members of the President's own party urged him to be moderate in the next annual message. They had some effect, although they did not seriously modify his private views. If France were an honorable nation, he said privately, she would pay the money and demand an apology afterward. . . . But from Maine to Florida came the voice, "No apology, no explanation--my [Jackson's] heart cordially responds to that voice."⁷

Unfortunately, Bassett makes no attempt to document the validity of Jackson's interpretation of public opinion. He simply assumes that because of Jackson's popularity, the American people supported his refusal to recant. Bassett, like Peck, fails to provide adequate evidence for his findings.

In her review of American opinion of France, Elizabeth Brett White is the first to attempt to assess domestic attitudes towards Jackson's conduct of the claims dispute. Noting Jackson's strong personality and unmitigated partisanship, White stresses that after the 1834 speech, the claims affair became an issue in the bitter party struggles of the day. "With the strong party feeling existing at the moment in the United States," she writes, "it was inevitable that the message should become the subject of party recriminations." But although White admits that partisan sympathies guided opinions of Jackson's diplomacy, she suggests that

⁷John Spencer Bassett, The Life of Andrew Jackson (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916; first published in 1911), pp. 96-101.

Jackson had ventured beyond the sentiment of the country. After reviewing the opinions of several Democratic and Whig journals, as well as a few individuals of varied standing, White concludes that Jackson's threat of reprisals had very little support. The majority of the Democratic journals, as well as Democratic members of the House and the Senate, viewed reprisals as unwarranted. The American people believed that the claims of the United States against France were just, but "Money, not the honor of the country, appeared to be the point at issue."⁸

Although the Whigs roundly condemned Jackson's belligerency, White notes that one notable Whig member of Congress, John Quincy Adams, supported Jackson. The "Old Man Eloquent" did not deem war to be necessary, but he was certain that reprisals should be made. In reply to the opponents of the fortification bill, Adams asserted that "'it was the duty of the House to act upon this subject, and declare whether they would comply with the proposal of the President or that they would do something to sustain the rights, interests, and honor of the nation.'" Whatever might be said of Jackson's message, Adams concluded, "'he, for one, would say as once was said of Lafayette, that whoever censured its impudence must yet admire its spirit.'"⁹ White adds, however, that

⁸White, American Opinion of France, pp. 96-101.

⁹Ibid., p. 104.

Adams's opinions were unique. And although the fortification bill passed the House, the Senate Whigs remained firm and killed the measure by inaction. Nevertheless, White concludes that the partisan debate over the claims issue "served to attract attention to France, and encourage among both Democrats and Whigs a critical spirit in regard to French affairs in general."¹⁰

While White rectifies the failure of both Peck and Bassett to analyze American public opinion, her work does not include diplomatic correspondence or the private papers of officials in the Jackson administration. Writing on the careers of two of Jackson's Secretaries of State during the thirties, Eugene I. McCormac demonstrates that there was a good deal of sentiment within official circles for punishing the recalcitrant French. Louis McLane, who held office from May, 1833, to June 1834, urged the president to take strong measures against the French, McCormac writes, for "the ministry possessed the power, if it had the will, to pay the money without an appropriation by the Chambers." Although McLane advocated the application of bold initiatives to persuade the French to pay the promised indemnity, McCormac adds that he did not favor "an immediate declaration of war, but he advised

⁹Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 109.

asking Congress for authority to make reprisals."¹¹

Following the retirement of McLane, Jackson appointed John Forsyth, an ardent supporter of the administration, as Secretary of State. According to McCormac, Forsyth also had some influence on the writing of the annual message of 1834. Shortly after taking office, Forsyth received a dispatch from Robert Livingston, the American minister at Paris, in which the representative asserted that a settlement of the claims question was impossible without some form of executive pressure. McCormac notes that Forsyth relayed Livingston's opinions to Jackson with a favorable recommendation. After the annual message, Forsyth gained prominence as the chief defender of Jackson's policy and, McCormac adds, was partially responsible for the adamant refusal to grant the French request for an apology. Concluding, McCormac notes that Forsyth advised acceptance of the British offer of mediation only on the condition that the United States would not be asked to retreat.¹²

Like Bassett, Marquis James views the claims controversy through the perspective of a biographer of Jackson.

¹¹Eugene I. McCormac, "Louis McLane," in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, ed. by Samuel F. Bemis, Vol. IV (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), p. 285.

¹²McCormac, "John Forsyth," in ibid., pp. 305, 309-315.

But while Bassett maintains that Jackson's 1834 message was "needlessly strong," James defends the president and asserts that the crisis of 1834-1835 was caused solely by the dilatory July Monarchy. Reviewing the repeated failure of American ministers to obtain justice on the claims matter, James praises Jackson's firm approach which resulted in the 1831 treaty. But when the French Chambers postponed payment, Jackson, "deeply mortified by their betrayal, realized that only the threat of reprisals would stir the French into action."¹³ The crisis deepened, James continues, when France demanded an apology. Fortunately, he writes, "England stepped in to save the face of Louis Philippe with an offer of mediation." A settlement was reached, James concludes, as "France immediately, and Jackson after just enough hesitation to avoid a look of precipitation, agreed to arbitrate."¹⁴

More a popularizer than a scholar, James ignores Jackson's domestic critics and assumes that the president echoed the sentiments of the American people. In a biography of Henry Clay, however, Glyndon G. Van Deusen reaffirms White's assertion that Jackson's diplomacy stirred a bitter partisan debate. He views the Senate rejection of the fortification bill as "Clay's one major victory

¹³Marquis James, Andrew Jackson: Portrait of a President (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1937), pp. 386-387.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 403.

over Jackson." Admitting that Jackson's forceful diplomacy may have enhanced respect for American rights, Van Deusen asserts that the threat of reprisals weakened an excellent moral issue, thereby presenting the Whigs with an opportunity for political gain. But the Whig opposition to Jackson's annual message of 1834, in spite of political enmity, "served as an emollient." In Van Deusen's view, the passage of the fortification bill would certainly have insulted France. "If one believes in sabre-rattling diplomacy," he writes, "the Whigs should be condemned; if not, they should be praised."¹⁵

To this point, the historiography of the claims controversy has been fragmentary. But although none of the authors discussed devotes more than a few pages to the subject, most have taken a similar attitude towards the claims dispute. Although Peck's biased view led him to isolate Jackson's personality as the decisive factor in the process which caused the claims question to become a critical issue in Franco-American relations, Bassett, White and Van Deusen all agree that Jackson's threat of reprisals was unwarranted. White and Van Deusen point to the partisan debate that resulted from Jackson's vigorous assertion of American rights, and conclude that Whig opposition mitigated the president's belligerency. McCormac, on the

¹⁵Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Life of Henry Clay (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1937), pp. 289-294.

basis of research into the diplomatic correspondence, asserts that Jackson was not alone in believing that strong measures were needed to convince France to pay the indemnity, but this does not suffice to establish that the president's actions reflected public opinion. Ignoring White, James maintains that Jackson's leadership was sound, and that the French were entirely to blame. James's sympathy for Jackson is obvious, and his work does not weaken the more prevalent view that Jackson himself created much of the animosity surrounding the dispute. In a 1941 monograph devoted to the history of the claims question from 1816 to 1836, Robert A. McLemore expands and reaffirms this interpretation of the impact of Jackson's diplomacy.

Reviewing the progress of the claims question from 1816 to 1829, McLemore concludes that a considerable "national sentiment" for settlement had begun to develop during the administration of John Quincy Adams. As early as 1826, he writes, "there was developing among the public a demand that more drastic measures be taken to secure an adjustment of the claims." To corroborate this, McLemore refers to two articles--one a report in the National Intelligencer of a public meeting held in January of 1826 concerning the need for a settlement of the spoliation claims, the other an editorial in the North American Review suggesting that "energetic steps" were required to solve

the issue. That these two articles demonstrated a public demand for indemnity from France is at best speculation, and they are used by McLemore only to provide a background to the claims crisis of the eighteen-thirties.¹⁶

Tracing the negotiations leading to the signing of a treaty in 1831, McLemore adds much to the historiography of the claims question. Through the use of both American and French diplomatic correspondence, he reviews the intricate negotiations, emphasizing the importance of the Revolution of 1830. Before the July Monarchy, McLemore maintains, relations between the United States and France were often plagued by partisan newspaper editorials. Because of this occasional animosity, Rives made only slow progress with the Bourbon regime. With the downfall of Charles X, however, Americans believed that the disputed claims would finally be solved and justice achieved.¹⁷ McLemore writes: "The news of the revolution was welcomed in the United States with much joy--the press seemed to feel unanimously that now, with the Bourbons out of the way, the negotiations could be completed with little problem." McLemore hastens to add, however, that the issue of indemnity was still far from solution and could have posed a serious threat to the renewed Franco-American amity. He refers to a dispatch sent by Rives to Secretary

¹⁶McLemore, Franco-American Relations, pp. 33-39.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 52-63.

of State Martin Van Buren in which the minister warned that although the new French leaders sympathized with the American claims, the question of finance would be difficult. And in spite of the signing of the treaty in 1831, Rives expressed regret that the French government did not believe the claims issue to be serious.¹⁸

Rives's trepidations were soon realized. The French Chambers refused to grant the necessary appropriations and the July Monarchy procrastinated. Furious with the delay, Jackson believed that the French government was unwilling to fulfill its obligation. "No one was more severe in the denunciation of the French than Jackson himself," McLemore writes, "he pronounced the course of the King of France 'jesuitical . . . toward us.'"¹⁹

In his estimation of the role of Jackson's personality in the crisis of 1834-1835, McLemore agrees with White, Van Deusen, and Bassett that the threat of reprisals was unnecessary. But McLemore also asserts that Jackson's 1834 speech aroused a spirit of "national aggressiveness" that had been absent since the War of 1812. The nation had expected Jackson, McLemore maintains, to deal with the claims issue in a firm but friendly tone, with possibly some recommendation for commercial restrictions if France

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 70-73.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 125.

still refused to comply with the treaty. But when Jackson adopted a "strongly nationalistic tone," McLemore writes,

and suggested the taking of "redress in our hand," he aroused a nation-wide interest in the matter which brought on the one hand bitter reproaches upon the administration for its hazardous experiment, and on the other vehement defenses of such a program. A matter which had been largely local in interest was transformed into one of "national honor," threatening to involve the two nations in war.²⁰

To this point, only James has suggested that Jackson's speech transformed the spoliation controversy into a question of "national honor." It is therefore requisite to examine McLemore's foundation for making such a claim.

As evidence that after Jackson's 1834 message the claims dispute was animated by an aroused "national honor," McLemore refers primarily to the Washington Globe and the National Intelligencer, as well as to a few private observers. Without detailing the relationship of the Globe and its editor Francis P. Blair to the administration, McLemore quotes that organ as assaulting the more reserved Intelligencer for suggesting that the 1831 treaty failed because of Jackson's militant diplomacy. It is certainly true that, as McLemore writes, "the press did not permit the public to forget the action that had been taken or the prospects for the future."²¹ Nevertheless, this alone

²⁰Ibid., p. 132.

²¹Ibid., pp. 133-136.

is insufficient to prove that Jackson's management of the claims affair revived an aggressive "national sentiment." In fact, McLemore admits that to use newspaper opinion as evidence of a national feeling on the claims dispute is misleading, for "the press of the United States divided in its views on the question according to whether it was Jackson or anti-Jackson."²² Given the polarization of the country in the thirties as the second two-party system was developing, it is not surprising that the message of 1834 stimulated acrimonious debate in the press as Whigs and Democrats vied for popular support.

In an attempt to bolster his claim that the spoliation dispute engendered a new belligerency within the United States, McLemore presents the views of three prominent citizens. "That the relations of the two countries were strained almost to the breaking point may be inferred," McLemore writes, from the following American leaders:

James A. Harris [Assistant Secretary of State and intimate friend of Adams] wrote Jackson, "under a strong conviction that eventually there will be war," offering his service in any capacity. Adams wrote in his Memoirs that "if the two countries be saved from war, it seems as if it could only be a special interposition of Providence." Judge Joseph Story found "the state of public affairs . . . anything but satisfactory," with the President "exceedingly warm for war with France." Story felt that the only hope lay in the resistance of the senate.²³

²²Ibid., p. 121.

²³Ibid., p. 157.

When McLemore states that the above opinions, in addition to the newspaper debate, are evidence of "strained relations" between France and the United States, he is undoubtedly correct. But it is doubtful that "strained relations" demonstrated that the American people was in arms demanding payment of the indemnity.

Like Bassett, McLemore asserts that Jackson's refusal to apologize to the French for his belligerent remarks in his 1834 message had broad support. Even in the Senate, where the fortification bill went down in defeat, there was a reluctance to accept responsibility for the failure. McLemore writes:

The fact that sentiment of the nation was becoming more solidified in support of the president may be inferred from the care the senate took to throw from its shoulders, as far as possible, the responsibility for the defeat of the fortification bill.

McLemore adds that the Intelligencer, seldom an administration advocate, warned that the defeat of the fortification bill did not mean that the nation was going to accept passively the nonexecution of the 1831 treaty.²⁴

Although McLemore goes to great pains to establish that Jackson's militant diplomacy was not without support, he concludes that the most important factor in the claims controversy was "Old Hickory." He writes.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 158-160.

Probably the most interesting revelation is the predominant influence of the President's personality upon the conduct of foreign relations. The difficulty of a democratic legislative body in divesting itself of partisan politics in dealing with international questions is also apparent. The intensification of bitterness over a comparatively unimportant issue as a result of constant stimulation of differences might have brought the two nations into conflict. The slowness of communications, which gave public opinion an opportunity to forget the differences, the influence of a group of conservative advisers, and the existence of other international issues of more consequence combined to act as successful preservers of the peace.²⁵

Nowhere in the above quotation is there any reference to a new spirit of "national aggressiveness." In essence, then, in spite of some dramatization, McLemore reaffirms the findings of Peck, Bassett, White, and Van Deusen. McLemore's claim that the spoliation crisis stirred up a national sentiment antagonistic toward France and favorable to war appears to be an overstatement.

Since the appearance of McLemore's study, historians have interpreted the claims controversy as a typical example of Jackson's presidential leadership and have emphasized the partisan reactions to his 1834 speech. In his biography of Adams, Samuel F. Bemis notes the contrast between the presidency of the experienced diplomat from Massachusetts and that of the venerable general from Tennessee. Adams

²⁵Ibid., p. 211.

was unwilling to resort to forcible measures to persuade the French to negotiate. Because of general public apathy, Bemis writes, Adams "had not wished to risk a rupture with a friendly nation over what seemed to so many people such a small matter, of private concern rather than paramount public interest." Jackson, however, "had the ability to arouse the people's patriotism and put them solidly behind him and the nation."²⁶

Reviewing the aftermath of the 1834 message, Bemis maintains that Jackson indeed had broad popular support. Although he relies on McLemore for background, Bemis uses extensive manuscript material to support this view. Noting the Whig opposition to the fortification bill, he concludes that "public reaction to the debate in the House of Representatives made it clear that the people were behind the President." Jackson's ultimate victory in the claims controversy "made the Whig Senate look sick."²⁷ And yet, Bemis never claims that Jackson's management of the affair aroused a new spirit of national militancy.

In a study of the Jacksonian Era, Van Deusen admits that there was a good deal of excitement created by Jackson's diplomacy, but he again places the entire public

²⁶Samuel F. Bemis, John Quincy Adams and the Union (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), pp. 306-307.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 320-322.

sentiment toward the issue within the spectrum of American partisan politics. "The merits of the French debt controversy can be endlessly debated, and to little effect."

Van Deusen writes:

Jackson had used threatening language in an effort to obtain satisfaction of a just claim. This was "big-stick" diplomacy. The Whigs paraded themselves in all the panoplies of moderation. Both sides angled for political advantage, and each sought, with some reason, to blame the other for the loss of the fortification bill.²⁸

The impact of Jackson's 1834 message upon American opinion of France, then, remains unclear. McLemore suggests that the militant speech stirred a "national sentiment of aggressiveness" absent since the War of 1812, but he fails to provide evidence to support this claim. As a result, the emphasis given especially by Van Deusen and White to the partisan reaction toward the message is more convincing. Still, it cannot be doubted that the claims issue contributed to a growing estrangement between Paris and Washington. And although Peck's prejudice against Jackson led him to emphasize his role in the claims dispute, it is also clear that much of the impetus behind the controversy originated with "Old Hickory." The difficulty of explaining the effect of the spoliation issue on American opinion of France

²⁸Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848 (Harper and Row, 1959), pp. 102-103.

is perhaps why Henry Blumenthal, in his survey of Franco-American relations, avoids entangling himself within the domestic politics of the thirties. Blumenthal merely concludes that the claims controversy is only one example among many showing that relations between France and the United States during the thirties were not as amicable as has usually been assumed.²⁹

Despite the ambiguity of much of the historiography of the claims dispute, the authors under discussion provide support for Albert Weinberg's interpretation that the thirties were a time of internal building before the expansionism of the "Roaring 'forties." "The speeches of Jackson as president," Weinberg writes, "exude the complacency and sense of self-sufficiency of this decade. Especially noteworthy is his confident observation concerning an issue always highly determinative of the attitude toward expansion: 'You have no longer any cause to fear danger from abroad.'"³⁰ Perhaps this is what McLemore intended when he referred to a renewed "national sentiment of aggressiveness." Be that as it may, the claims dispute, in spite of Jackson's belligerency, was settled in 1836, thereby removing the one most outstanding issue in Franco-American relations.

²⁹Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, p. 45.

³⁰Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, p. 108.

CHAPTER IV

AMERICAN CONTINENTAL EXPANSION AND FRANCE

On the surface, the much-delayed settlement of the claims dispute in 1836 removed one obstacle to better relations between France and the United States. During the next few years, the two countries pursued their own goals without interference or objection. Striking examples of this apparent easing in Franco-American relations are to be seen in the lack of reactions to the French military interventions in Mexico in 1838 and in the La Plata region of South American in 1839. Both the "Pastry War" and the La Plata venture were clear violations of the Monroe Doctrine, but the United States voiced no protests. Explanations of this unusual American indifference towards European interference in the Western Hemisphere are vague, but there is little doubt that American claims against Mexico, popular sympathy for the Texan revolution, and the general timidity of the Van Buren administration were important factors.¹

¹For a review of the "Pastry War," see Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Mexico, Vol. V (San Francisco: The History Co., 1887), pp. 186-205; William Spence Robertson, "French Intervention in Mexico in 1838," Hispanic American

But rather than providing time for reconciliation, the years after the settlement of the claims dispute were characterized more by the development of anxiety and suspicion. The United States, ending a period of consolidation, was approaching an era of new growth. To the West lay the undeveloped but tantalizing Pacific coast and the sparsely settled Mexican province of California. To the Southwest, American immigrants had already freed their adopted Texas from Mexican rule and established the Lone Star Republic. Towards all of this, the French government of Louis Philippe reacted nervously. Once underway, would there be any limit to American expansion? Paris was the first major power to recognize Texan independence; after 1840, Louis Philippe's new Foreign Minister, Francois Guizot, began to look for other means to protect French interests in the New World from the anticipated expansion of the American republic.

French apprehensions materialized quickly. Seeking

Historical Review, XXIV (1944), pp. 222-252. Regarding the La Plata episode see John F. Cady, Foreign Intervention in the Rio de La Plata, 1838-1850 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1929), pp. 24-25, 182-188. For explanations of American policy, or the lack of policy, toward these intrusions, see White, American Opinion of France, pp. 111, 114-115; Dexter Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), pp. 42-45, 63; and Cady, Intervention in the La Plata, p. 268.

to redeem his discredited administration with a spectacular success, President John Tyler endorsed the annexation of Texas in his annual message to Congress on December 3, 1844.² During the presidential campaign of 1844 the Texas issue had gained momentum, and in February of the new year a joint resolution offering annexation passed Congress.³ Prompted by his Secretary of State, John C. Calhoun, Tyler decided to initiate the proceedings for annexation. On the eve of the inauguration of the Democrat James K. Polk, he dispatched Andrew J. Donelson to Texas to offer annexation.⁴ It soon became apparent that Polk would accept Tyler's plan, and on July 4, 1845, the Texas Congress voted overwhelmingly to enter the Union. During the previous two years, Guizot had cooperated with Great Britain in various efforts to insure Texas independence. Now, with annexation certain, and with American troops on the contested border of the Rio Grande, war between Mexico and the United States seemed imminent. The results of such a war foreboded ill not only for Mexico, but for France and Great Britain as well--California would certainly be at stake.

²Senate Ex. Doc. (449), 28th Cong., 2nd Sess., No. 1, pp. 1-18. See also Charles Sellers, James K. Polk: Continentalist, 1843-1846 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 50-60.

³Congressional Globe, Vol. XIV, 28th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 322-363.

⁴Sellers, Polk, pp. 215-216.

Guizot's involvement in Texas had aroused accusations of French intrigue from the ardent American expansionists. Apprehensive lest France find herself at odds with the United States, Guizot's domestic opposition questioned the wisdom of his policy. In reply, the French minister addressed the Chamber of Deputies in June, defending his attempts to prevent the annexation of Texas and defining France's broad interest in the New World in the face of growing American dominance. France, Guizot declared,

had a lasting interest in the maintenance of independent states in America, and in the balance of forces which exists in that part of the world. There are in America three powers, The United States, England, and the states of Spanish origin. . . . What is the interest of France? It is that the independent states remain independent, that the balance of forces between the great masses which divide America continue, that no one of them become exclusively preponderant. . . . France. . . ought to protect by the authority of its name the independence of states and the maintenance of the balance of the great political forces in America.⁵

Guizot's declaration created much excitement in the United States and became a factor in the framing of Polk's annual message to Congress in December of 1845.⁶

In a private conversation with George Bancroft at about the time of his inauguration, Polk had divulged his commitment to "the acquisition of California and a larger district

⁵Quoted in Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, pp. 71-72.

⁶Ibid., pp. 73-74.

on the coast." According to Polk's most recent biographer, "only later would it become clear that he had resolved from the first to unroll the nation's territory far up and down the Western shore of North America."⁷ Between his inauguration and the writing of the annual message, Polk had been warned of possible French and British designs on California. This, coupled with Guizot's June speech, may have influenced the President to dedicate much of his December message to the danger of European involvement in the New World, and especially in North America. Alluding to Guizot's speech, Polk warned that the extension of American settlements to previously unoccupied territories, "the expansion of free principles, and our rising greatness as a nation, are attracting the attention of the powers of Europe, and lately the doctrine has been broached in some of them of a 'balance of power' on this continent to check our advancement." Although desirous of preserving good relations with all nations, Polk continued, the United States "can not in silence permit any European interference on the North American continent, and should any such interference be attempted will be ready to resist it at any and all hazards." Since "the American system of government is entirely different from that of Europe," the Old World principle of a

⁷Sellers, Polk, p. 213.

"balance of power can not be permitted to have any application on the North American continent, and especially to the United States." Concluding, Polk lauded Monroe's 1823 definition of the principle of two spheres, and added that "the reassertion of this principle, especially in reference to North America, is at this day but the promulgation of a policy which no European power should cherish the disposition to resist."⁸

The Guizot-Polk exchange is a central point in the historiography of Franco-American diplomatic relations. Occurring during the most critical year of American continental expansion, the two speeches have been interpreted by one group of historians as representing an irrepressible dichotomy between the Old and New Worlds. Hence, when Guizot declared that it was in the interest of France to preserve "the balance of forces" that existed in the Western Hemisphere, historians of this inclination have generally asserted that the security and natural rights of the United States were directly threatened. They view Polk's annual message, then, as essentially defensive in nature: if the United States had not acted to prevent European intervention in North America, Texas, California, and Oregon could have fallen under the sway of the absolutist,

⁸James D. Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Washington, 1890). Vol. IV, pp. 398-399.

reactionary governments of France and England. In his landmark study of the Monroe Doctrine, Dexter Perkins expands this interpretation by suggesting that a "clash of systems," implicit in Monroe's 1823 declaration, existed beneath the surface of the relations of the United States with Europe, and the turmoil of American expansion only brought it to the fore. Perkins isolates the Guizot and Polk statements of 1845 as the best examples of this ideologically inspired split.⁹ Significantly, both Perkins and this first group of historians depend heavily upon the accusations of American expansionists, including Polk, for evidence that France did indeed present a threat to the security of American democratic principles. And yet, Perkins helped to revise this viewpoint by noting the partisan background of Polk's speech. Since he wrote, historians have generally challenged his dependence upon the rhetoric of American expansionism. The frantic alarm over European "machinations"--be they French or British--has been placed within the context of partisan politics and sectionalism. As a result, recent historians have tended to conclude that any fear of overt French intervention in the New World was chimerical, and that published forebodings were largely propaganda intended for domestic consumption.

⁹Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, pp. 70-96.

The purpose of this chapter, then, will be to review the historiography of Franco-American relations with respect to American continental expansion, examining in detail the above trends. On the basis of this review, an attempt will be made in the conclusion to answer the following questions: (1) Can it be said that French involvement in the affairs of North America presented a challenge to the United States and as a result provided much of the impetus behind American continental expansion? (2) What significance did the Guizot-Polk exchange have within the context of Franco-American relations? (3) What impact did the realization of Polk's continental vision have upon Franco-American relations? Because of the complexity of the topic, this writer will examine first the role of Texas in Franco-American relations, culminating with Guizot's speech, and second, the California issue, leading to Polk's message. Finally, this writer will review the historiography of Franco-American relations during the year 1846, concentrating on the issues of Oregon, the Mexican War, and European intervention in the La Plata region of South America.

The impact of the Texas issue upon Franco-American relations was first noted by three early twentieth-century historians, whose works are still used today. In 1907, Jesse S. Reeves published an analysis of the diplomacy

practiced by Tyler and Polk; three years later, Ephraim D. Adams brought forth his influential work on Great Britain's interests and efforts in the Lone Star Republic; and finally, Justin H. Smith's history of the annexation of Texas appeared in 1911. Taken together, the three almost concurrent works form a nearly complete review of Franco-American relations regarding the Texas question.¹⁰

Dealing with American policy towards Texas, Reeves isolates the role of Calhoun as Secretary of State during the last year of Tyler's presidency. While in the State Department, Calhoun often voiced a fear that Texas, in pursuing a policy of independence, would fall under the sway of a country hostile to the interests of the United States. Reeves asserts that the South Carolinian's apprehensions were not unwarranted. Because the Van Buren administration refused to accept the Texas offer of annexation in 1837, the leaders of the infant republic turned elsewhere for security against a still belligerent Mexico.¹¹ Upon the election of Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar to the presidency of Texas in 1838, the United States was duly warned,

¹⁰See James S. Reeves, American Diplomacy Under Tyler and Polk (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1907); Ephraim Douglass Adams, British Interests and Activities in Texas, 1838-1846 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1910); Justin H. Smith, The Annexation of Texas (New York: Barnes and Noble Reprint, 1941; first published in 1911).

¹¹Reeves, Diplomacy Under Tyler and Polk, p. 84.

Reeves writes, that if Texas were denied American protection, "she would turn for aid to the powers of Europe, notably to France and England, who. . . would be glad to avail themselves of the great advantage which a generous commercial treaty would give them."¹² According to Reeves, this consideration later spurred Calhoun to assail the "designs" of France and Britain in Texas. Although the Secretary was confident that the people of Texas still desired annexation, he "feared that there might be a revulsion of feeling. . . on account of the rejection of the treaty, and that this might be played upon by those who were unfriendly to the United States."¹³ It is clear, then, that Calhoun believed Texas annexation to be necessary to the security of the United States. He viewed Mexico's policy of stalling annexation by a threat of war as an attempt "'to drive Texas into political connections with some other power less congenial to her feelings and favorable to her independence, and more threatening to her and our permanent welfare and safety."¹⁴

But Calhoun believed that Great Britain and not France posed the greatest threat to American security in Texas.

¹²Ibid., p. 87.

¹³Ibid., p. 166.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 169-170.

In his explanation of the different policies pursued by Calhoun toward the two European powers most concerned with Texas, Reeves makes his most important contribution to the historiography of Franco-American relations. In 1843, the French Chambers had voted to refrain from participating with Great Britain in outlawing slavery. In spite of Guizot's amiable feeling toward Lord Aberdeen, the British Foreign Secretary, the rejection of the proposed treaty by the Chambers signified a lingering French animosity towards Great Britain.¹⁵ When in 1844 the rumor reached Calhoun that France was considering joint action with London to prevent the annexation of Texas by the United States, the Secretary's response was dictated by his adamant views on slavery. Consequently, Reeves writes, Calhoun "dwelt upon the dissimilarity of interest between France and Great Britain. The latter had political, the former merely commercial motives in treating for Texas independence." Unfortunately, Reeves neglects to explain why the contemplated Anglo-French joint intervention in Texas never materialized. Instead of pursuing his analysis of Calhoun's policy towards France and attempting to interpret its relation to traditional Franco-American friendship, the author is content to deride his deceitful diplomacy. He writes:

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 34-36.

It is hard to comprehend that such a position was ever assumed by any American Secretary of State. Had Calhoun stated, . . . that Great Britain and France must keep hands off Texas, he would have remained on safe ground. He could not, however, say this as long as the United States had determined not to permit Texas to remain independent. To draw France away from England upon the Texas question was obviously necessary.¹⁶

In part, Reeves's reluctance to examine French policy towards joint intervention with England in Texas can be explained by a lack of documentary evidence. In 1910, three years after Reeves published, the archives of the British Foreign Office and the Admiralty were opened. E.D. Adams demonstrates that these are indeed vital to an understanding of French attitudes towards the Texas question.

Adams makes two basic points regarding the policies of London and Paris in Texas. In the first place, he denies that slavery played any role in the British involvement in Texas. And in the second place, he asserts that the British were responsible for the failure of joint Anglo-French intervention. Because Calhoun so feared British aims in Texas, these viewpoints are of special note to Franco-American relations. Adams intimates that since Britain was unwilling to resort to forcible intervention in Texas, any apprehensions of a similar French threat were illusory.

To dispel the notion that a conspiracy to abolish slavery was behind the British efforts in Texas, Adams examines closely

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 173-174.

its principal source. Duff Green, an unofficial American representative in Europe dedicated to the annexation of Texas, first warned of the ulterior motives of Britain in Texas. In contrast to Green's forebodings, Adams reviews the dispatches of Edward Everett, the American Minister to the Court of St. James. Writing to Secretary of State Abel P. Upshur in November of 1843, Everett asserted that "the subject of domestic slavery was never so much as mentioned or alluded to by the British minister to the government of Texas except to disclaim in most emphatic terms any intention on the part of England to interfere with it there." Although Britain might be forced to appease her own abolitionists, Everett concluded, she "had no idea of going on a crusade with them to abolish slavery in Texas or anywhere else." Regrettably, Upshur's successor, Calhoun, chose to ignore Everett's dispatch and to accept Green's warning as valid.¹⁷

Because London's interest in Texas was basically commercial, not political, Aberdeen never seriously considered resorting to force to impede the annexation of Texas. According to Adams, Aberdeen "probably never dreamed that the United States would venture to annex Texas in the face of vigorous objections from England and France."¹⁸

¹⁷Adams, British Interests and Activities in Texas, p. 144.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 159.

Confident that the Americans would be intimidated by a united Anglo-French diplomatic front guaranteeing the independence of Texas, Aberdeen proceeded to enlist the French behind his "Diplomatic Act." The British minister at Paris reported that "M. Guizot was of opinion that it was of importance that the designs of the Government of the United States with regard to Texas, should be prevented."¹⁹

Britain's withdrawal from the plan, Adams states, frustrated Guizot's desire to forestall American expansion to the Rio Grande. The turning point came in the summer of 1844, when the British ambassador at Washington, Sir Richard Pakenham, warned Aberdeen of the danger to European intervention in Texas. Pakenham's "portrayal of the strength and depth of American feeling," Adams writes,

was a revelation to Aberdeen, and was extremely disconcerting. In his plan for a joint action with France, he had made but meager allowance for United States opposition, and he had believed that if accepted by Mexico and Texas it would effectively and peacefully prevent American annexation.²⁰

Aberdeen had been assured of "French compliance and cordiality when joint action was first proposed, [and] he had no reason to think that France would not act heartily with England." But even French cooperation, Adams notes, "would not insure

¹⁹Quoted in ibid., p. 160.

²⁰Ibid., p. 180.

a successful termination of the negotiation under such circumstances as Pakenham states." Thus, Aberdeen realized his plan was destined to fail, and he gracefully allowed France to withdraw from the "Diplomatic Act."²¹

So far, it has been shown that much of Calhoun's fear of Anglo-French intervention in Texas was unwarranted. Although Reeves notes that Calhoun's commitment to slavery as an institution led the Secretary to discriminate between the British and French involvements in Texas, he fails to determine what interest the French government had in that youthful republic. Adams intimates that France might have intervened in Texas if Aberdeen had not retreated upon receipt of Pakenham's dispatch; but his work also contains no outline of French policy towards Texas. Through extensive research into French source material--both private and governmental--Justin Smith was able to construct a summary of French Texan diplomacy.

In Smith's view, a prime motive behind French efforts in Texas was the limitation of the expansion of the United States. Because of his devotion to monarchy, Smith writes, Louis Philippe "could not look with favor upon the development of a powerful republic." Furthermore, the July Monarchy was sympathetic towards London, for the British had been the first to recognize the government of Louis Philippe,

²¹Ibid., pp. 180-181.

and since the two countries had similar interests in Texas, they "would naturally be drawn together by joint action regarding it."²²

French policy in Texas, Smith tells us, was further prompted by a keen desire to forestall American dominance in Latin America. Louis Philippe regarded France as the guardian of Spanish America, and especially Mexico. For this reason, Smith writes, the French monarch "was alive to the danger that our neighbor on the South [Mexico] might suffer from American encroachments." Also, it was to Paris "a point of pride to save a power which his majesty had acknowledged as independent from being swallowed up by annexation."²³

Unlike Adams, Smith claims that it was France which first indicated a reluctance to intervene in Texas. According to Smith, the diplomacy of the Guizot ministry so irritated the French public that the minister was forced to abandon the "Diplomatic Act." In spite of Guizot's détente with Aberdeen, Anglo-French relations were still plagued by such questions as the future of Algeria and Morocco, and the memory of recent troubles in Egypt. As a result, most Frenchmen harbored an unmitigated resentment of the British. Furthermore, because London's deeper involvement in Texas, as well as her superior power in the

²²Smith, Annexation of Texas, p. 385.

²³Ibid., p. 286.

New World, required France to submit to the British lead in any joint effort, Guizot's government was accused of "truckling" to the English. Hence, when Guizot's adherence to the "Diplomatic Act" came into the public view, Smith writes, "the outcry against it was furious." In the Chamber of Deputies Guizot's diplomacy was denounced as "undignified intrigue," and Guizot was accused of betraying the United States. "It was entirely wrong, said many, to turn against an ancient and valuable customer without the strongest of reasons."²⁴

In his assessment of the failure of joint intervention, Smith credits French public opinion with forcing Guizot to reconsider. Never would the French people be willing to risk war with the Americans, Smith reasons. But as evidence of an American determination to resort to war to defeat any European attempt to guarantee Texas independence, Smith notes only the vehement outcries of Calhoun, Green, and other advocates of annexation. His assumption that Calhoun and Green echoed the sentiments of the American people permits Smith to conclude the following:

²⁴Ibid., pp. 397-398.

In short then, it appears that Great Britain was so anxious to prevent the annexation of Texas that she stood ready, if supported by France, to coerce Mexico and fight the United States; that the French government were at first no less willing than England to agree upon decisive measures; that the determination of the American people to resent vigorously such dictation--a course sure to arouse the many Frenchmen who were against the British, against the King, and against Guizot--caused that power to fall back; that in consequence England wavered and then withdrew; and that all this grand effort at international concert resulted only in a sort of conspiracy to divert the people of Texas from the destiny actually preferred by the majority.²⁵

More so than Reeves, who seems to avoid the matter, Smith sees a crisis in Franco-American relations with regard to Texas--a crisis precipitated by the unpopular diplomacy of the Paris government. It was only when the prospect became clear that France, in union with England, risked war with the United States that Guizot retreated. Smith notes that a "decisive element in the affair was the readiness of a large number of Americans to plunge into a war for which the nation was wholly unprepared." He does not mention, however, that this willingness for war was most prevalent among dedicated American expansionists. He does not give consideration to the possibility that the American outcry against the "Diplomatic Act" was more partisan politics than responsible leadership, except to note that "after

²⁵Ibid., p. 413.

these diplomatic events had been taking place for months, it was loudly asserted by opponents of Tyler's administration, not only that England had no schemes afoot with reference to Texas, but that every idea of a European concert against annexation was transparent moonshine."²⁶ True, this is a vital exception. But it simply is insufficient to counter what has gone before.

A third interpretation of the failure of the Anglo-French effort at joint mediation appeared in 1913. Writing on Mexican diplomacy on the eve of war with the United States, George L. Rives suggests that Britain doubted the willingness of France to act forcibly against its former ally. Although he agrees with Smith that American expansion affronted Paris, Rives points out that even the French ministry distrusted the British and was hesitant to offend the United States. Because Guizot was a Protestant bourgeois, Rives writes, "he profoundly distrusted the people, and he never comprehended the strength or sincerity of their demands. He practiced, therefore, with the cordial consent of the King, a policy of timid conservatism, of which continued peace and material prosperity were to be the fruits."²⁷ With such an attitude, Rives concludes, although Guizot did what was possible to strengthen ties with London, "there was

²⁶Ibid., p. 413.

²⁷George L. Rives, "Mexican Diplomacy on Eve of War with United States," American Historical Review, XVIII (January, 1913), pp. 267-277.

a point beyond which the French government would not have to go in support of Great Britain."²⁸

In spite of their many dissimilarities, Reeves, Adams, Smith, and Rives agree on one point--namely, that by the summer of 1844 the "Diplomatic Act" had been severely weakened and could present little real threat to the United States. Both London and Paris had reason to avoid confronting the United States over Texas. Smith provides an obvious explanation for Guizot's refusal to intervene actively in Texas--the French populace was squarely opposed to any gesture offensive to the United States--but he still sanctions the alarm sounded by many Americans over the rumor of Anglo-French intervention in Texas. Reeves, Adams, and Rives also fail to examine the motives behind the vehement American denunciation of European involvement in Texas. More recent historians of the Lone Star Republic, as well as students of American continental expansion, have asserted that not only was any fear of European intervention in Texas artificially stimulated by a shrewd Texas diplomacy, but also that the rhetoric surrounding the annexation of Texas was highly partisan and designed for domestic consumption.

In 1904, and with access only to printed sources, George P. Garrison noted the Texas reaction to the refusal

²⁸Ibid., p. 285.

of the United States to accept its offer of annexation. "If the mother-country of Texas would not cultivate sufficiently cordial relations with her runaway children," Garrison writes, the young republic would be forced to appeal to France and England. The Texas ambassador to the United States warned Secretary of State John Forsyth that "delay might be fatal to annexation, for Texas was establishing relations with foreign powers that might develop insurmountable obstacles" to that project. Unfortunately, Garrison concludes, the Van Buren administration at first postponed, then dropped annexation.²⁹

To be sure, Van Buren's rejection of the Texas invitation was predicated upon an accurate judgment of domestic politics; but the delay of annexation only made Texas leaders more determined to insure independence.³⁰ By the eighteen-forties, Texas diplomacy had succeeded. Sam Houston and Anson Jones provided the impetus behind the effort to protect Texas through the recognition and mediation of France and England. That they had good reason to turn to Europe is clear; that both realized the impact their

²⁹George P. Garrison, "The First Stage of the Movement for the Annexation of Texas," American Historical Review, X (October, 1904), pp. 78-89.

³⁰See ibid., pp. 80-81; also Ethel Zivley Rather, "The Recognition of the Republic of Texas by the United States," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, VIII (April, 1910), pp. 155-256.

diplomacy would have on the American government is also clear. According to Thomas M. Marshall, Houston realized that the Tyler administration would be sensitive to rumors that Texas had close ties with Europe. Hence, when Texas dependence upon Europe was "made known to Tyler, as Houston probably intended," Tyler became even more adamant in his devotion to annexation.³¹

St. George Leakin Sioussat also suggests that the Tyler administration capitalized upon rumors of French and British involvement in Texas to further annexation. Writing on Calhoun's tenure as Secretary of State, Sioussat notes that the American minister at Paris, William Rufus King, had informed the Secretary that France had no intention of forcibly intervening in Texas. In reply to allegations that France was siding with England in opposition to annexation, King further reported to Calhoun that "'Mr. Guizot at once reassured me that no such step . . . had been taken: that on this subject France had acted for herself and in connection with no other power.'" But, according to Sioussat, Calhoun was better informed than his representative in France and could not be mollified. Although he approved of King's distinction between the interests of France and those of England in Texas, Calhoun set out to defeat the intrigues

³¹Thomas Maitland Marshall, "Diplomatic Relations of Texas and the United States, 1839-1843," ibid., XV (April, 1912), p. 290.

of Paris and London through annexation.³²

Sioussat's research into the King-Calhoun correspondence broke new ground, but in justifying Calhoun's denial of the minister's reassurances, he demonstrates his acceptance of the polemics of annexation. In contrast to Sioussat, Mary Katherine Chase views the American accusation of French and British "machinations" in Texas as unfounded.

According to Chase, European interest in Texas was innocuous and based solely upon the professed desire of the Texans for independence. Perhaps a little sentimental towards the Lone Star Republic, Chase maintains that Texas, deeply wounded by the refusal of the United States to accept its proposal of annexation, was rescued by her friends in Europe. Chase scorns what she calls the "pretendues 'menees europeens' au Texas," so vehemently denounced in the United States, and is one of the first to recognize the partisanship of these accusations. She writes:

. . . l'intérêt que certain des gouvernements européens commençaient à prendre au sort du Texas, ou ils envoyèrent des agents pour les représenter régulièrement, ne tardèrent pas à faire croire aux États-Unis mille bruits sur les intentions de ces gouvernements amis et de faire croire, à la facile jalousie du peuple Américain, qu'il existait des intrigues européens, et surtout britanniques, au Texas. Ces sentiments

³²St. George Leakin Sioussat, "John Caldwell Calhoun," in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, ed. by Samuel F. Bemis, Vol. V (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), pp. 169-170.

de défiance et de soupçon furent habilement exploités par les orateurs politiques--pour des raisons souvent personnelles. Ils acquirent enfin une telle importance que, si l'on devait lire l'histoire des relations entre l'Europe et Texas dans les pamphlets et les journaux de l'époque on n'y trouverait qu'un tissu de mensonges et de rancunes politiques.³³

Lest the United States take offense, Chase notes, Britain and France were at first circumspect and required that Texas prove itself a viable nation.

Chase stresses two points which were instrumental in revising the historiography of France-American relations with respect to Texas. In the first place, she asserts that neither France nor England intended to offend the United States in their dealings with Texas. They simply believed that Texas desired independence and should be allowed to determine its own destiny. In the second place, she concludes that warnings of European intrigues in Texas

³³Mary Katherine Chase, Négociations de la République du Texas en Europe, 1837-1845 (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1932), pp. 110-112. I have translated Chase as follows:

. . .the interest certain European governments began to take in the fate of Texas, where they sent agents to regularly represent them, was not long in causing widespread speculation in the United States as to the intentions of these friendly governments, and in leading to the belief of the easily jealous American people, that European intrigues, especially British, existed in Texas. These feelings of mistrust and suspicion were skillfully exploited by political orators--often for personal reasons. They acquired such an importance that finally, if one must read the history of the relations between Europe and Texas from the pamphlets and newspapers of the period, one will find only a pack of lies and political spite.

were expansionist propaganda. Unfortunately, Chase provides sufficient evidence to support only her first assertion. If, expanding upon Sioussat's findings, she had shown that Calhoun, Tyler, and the other advocates of annexation had information revealing the basically honorable intentions of France and Britain and neglected or rejected it, then her second point would have been strengthened. It is simply not justified to claim that partisan politics and expansionist emotion created an artificial crisis in Franco-American relations without extensive documentation.

In his thoughtful study of "Manifest Destiny," Albert K. Weinberg supports the view that the proponents of the annexation of Texas raised the spectre of European intrigue to further their cause. In the eyes of the dedicated American expansionists, Weinberg asserts, European involvement in Texas, as elsewhere in North America, "appeared" to threaten the United States. He writes:

British and French attempts to establish sovereignty or political influence in adjacent countries appeared to threaten not merely economic and strategic interests but also the security of democracy. The expansionism of the 'forties arose as a defensive effort to forestall the encroachment of Europe in North America. . . . As one can see in the most numerous utterances, the conception of an "extension of the area of freedom" became general as an ideal of preventing absolutistic Europe from lessening the area open to American democracy.³⁴

³⁴Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, p. 109.

In a 1941 article, R.A. McLemore offers further proof that France and England only "appeared" to endanger American interests in Texas. Drawing heavily from the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, as well as from Smith, Adams, and Chase, McLemore's brief article is a synopsis of French policy in Texas. He asserts that France gave little reason for the United States to resent her involvement in Texas. "In the end," he writes, French "policy weakened the British program of opposition and thus made the final consumation of annexation less difficult." Throughout the entire affair, from 1837 to 1845, "the French leaders were careful not to take any action that would alienate the friendship of the United States."³⁵

The desire to avoid offending the United States, McLemore claims, was coupled with the hope of the Guizot ministry that Texas independence would be preserved. McLemore echoes Smith when he writes that "Guizot found. . .there were certain political and commercial considerations which would not permit France to view such a move with indifference." Included in these considerations were

³⁵Richard A. McLemore, "The Influence of French Diplomatic Policy on the Annexation of Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XLIII (January, 1940), p. 347.

the possible consequences to Mexico, the Spanish race and the Catholic religion in America. The annexation of Texas, Guizot declared, would lead directly to the conquest of Mexico. This would place the United States in such a position of predominance that it would cause alarm in Europe. The commercial considerations of most importance. . . were first the hope that Texas would offer a profitable market. . . and second the expectation that French shipping would find the direct trade with Texas profitable. Guizot also expressed the belief that French prestige would suffer by annexation since France had been the first European state to recognize the independence of Texas.³⁶

The French attitude towards Texas, then, was ambivalent. Consequently, France could present no real threat to American interests in Texas, and suspicions to that effect were unwarranted.

McLemore's article is a watershed in the historiography of the role of Texas in Franco-American relations. During the past thirty years, historians have increasingly stressed both the influence of Texas diplomacy upon American attitudes toward the French presence in Texas and the enervating ambivalence of French policy and sentiments towards American expansion.

In 1941, Joseph William Schmitz published the first detailed examination of the various aspects of Texan diplomacy. Paraphrasing Memucan Hunt, the Texas minister to the United States during most of the Van Buren administration, Schmitz analyzes the unfavorable situation in

³⁶Ibid., p. 342.

Washington concerning annexation:

. . .he [Hunt] wrote that most of the important political men including Van Buren were eager for annexation; for the past twelve years had it not been the settled and uniform policy of the United States to acquire Texas? Yet they would not act hampered as they were "by their party trammels on the one hand, and their treaty obligations with Mexico on the other, by the furious opposition of all the free states, by the fear of incurring the charge of false dealings and injustice, and of involving this country in a war."³⁷

It was with Hunt's views in mind, Schmitz asserts, that Texans fashioned their diplomacy to provide insurance in the event that annexation continued unfulfilled. But annexation was not regarded as a cure-all, for the Texan government feared that war with Mexico would result. In essence, then, Schmitz interprets Texas diplomacy as two-sided: on the one hand, the leadership sought to satisfy the popular desire for annexation; and on the other, it hoped to provide an opportunity for European mediation to settle the dispute with Mexico.³⁸

In a 1948 biography of Anson Jones, A Texas diplomat and politician whose career spanned the entire life of the Lone Star Republic, Herbert Gambrell makes the more positive claim that the Texan leadership hoped to stimulate American

³⁷Joseph William Schmitz, Texan Statecraft, 1836-1845 (San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1941), p. 58.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 176, 202.

alarm over European intrigues so that the United States would offer annexation. After the failure of the first attempt to bring Texas into the Union, Jones knew, Gambrell writes, "that annexation would be impossible unless American sentiment changed."³⁹ Houston appointed Jones Secretary of State in 1842, whereupon the effort to change the American attitude intensified. Intending to stir Washington into action, Jones instructed his representative there to intimate "that Texas was seeking connections with Europe."⁴⁰ Calhoun and Tyler responded quickly, but the debate on annexation was renewed in 1844, and Jones saw the need for further "hints" of Anglo-French designs in Texas. Gambrell writes: "What the United States needed, Dr. Jones thought, was 'another scare. One or two doses of English calomel and French quinine. . . and the case will be pretty well out of danger.'"⁴¹

Stanley Siegel capped the historiography of the shrewd Texan diplomacy in 1956. Siegel's study is primarily a political history of Texas, going beyond Gambrell to include such figures as Lamar, Austin, and Houston. Nevertheless,

³⁹Herbert Gambrell, Anson Jones: The Last President of Texas (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1948), p. 156.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 276.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 327. Author's italics.

Siegel does reaffirm what Gambrell has written about the goals of Texan diplomacy. "The Executive's entire policy in the annexation proceedings," Siegel claims, "was based on the idea of prompting the United States to accept annexation by making the most of English friendship."⁴² But not only was English involvement to be emphasized, for due to the Anglo-French "Diplomatic Act" a British threat to the United States meant a French threat as well. Paris had recognized Texas in 1839, and in the forties the Texan government hoped that this would "show the United States the Republic's importance as an independent power."⁴³ Schmitz, Gambrell, and Siegel, then, clearly establish that the leadership of Texas employed American suspicion of Europe to further annexation.

With few exceptions, recent historians have reaffirmed McLemore's view that French policy in Texas did not endanger American interests.⁴⁴ McLemore's influence is pervasive in

⁴²Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, 1836-1845 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1956), p. 228.

⁴³Ibid., p. 119.

⁴⁴Two notable exceptions are Donald C. McKay, The United States and France (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951); and Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956). McKay is confused regarding French policy in Texas (see p. 88), and Billington reverts to the older view that France did indeed present a challenge to American interests in Texas (see p. 137).

Henry Blumenthal's important monograph. Summarizing French policy in Texas, Blumenthal writes:

As long as France could not acquire Texas directly. . . it favored the independence of the Lone Star Republic. This policy was designed to block the dynamic southwestern advance of the American people as well as to keep the door open for the dynastic interests of the House of Bourbon. For in Guizot's judgment, Europe had the duty to stem the flow of Protestantism and republicanism on the American continent. When in the fall of 1839 France recognized Texas in exchange for a favorable trade treaty, it became the first European power to take this step. From that moment on it had an additional reason to object to the annexation of this independent state by the United States.⁴⁵

But France merely "wished to convey the impression of a united diplomatic front in order to make military intervention unnecessary," Blumenthal hastens to add. He also quotes, as does McLemore, Guizot's declaration that "'I am not prepared to say that its [Texas] junction with the American states is of sufficient importance to us to justify us in having recourse to arms in order to prevent it.'" ⁴⁶

One point, however, remains in doubt. Because McLemore does not mention the failure of Aberdeen's scheme for joint action in Texas, it can only be assumed from his article that Paris feared that intervention in Texas would offend the United States. Blumenthal is content to list the

⁴⁵Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 38-39.

differing opinions of Smith, Adams, and Rives on the matter, concluding that "historians are generally agreed that the question was one of joint intervention or none."⁴⁷

Frederick Merk has shed some light on this confused subject, and he suggests that due to memories of British arrogance and predominance, the entente cordiale was at best feeble. Merk also reviews the Calhoun-King correspondence, as well as Calhoun's subsequent efforts to discriminate between Paris and London, and in his conclusion asserts that this only further alienated the British from the French.⁴⁸ Thus, Merk seems to accept the validity of both the Adams and Rives interpretations.

Clearly, the American annexation of Texas ran counter to Guizot's sympathies, and his resulting frustration was exhibited in his June speech. Hindered not only by domestic politics, but also by the weakness of France in the New World, Guizot was unable to preserve Texan independence. His speech reflects both the inability of France to influence events in the New World, and the ideological inclinations of the July Monarchy. It is surprising that only two authors have dealt extensively with the Guizot declaration; it is significant that they differ as to its meaning.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 38.

⁴⁸Frederick Merk, The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism, 1843-1849 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pp. 40-43.

According to Dexter Perkins, Guizot's speech was self-defeating and only further separated the United States from France. After quoting Guizot's remarks, he writes:

It is true that nothing in the sentences just quoted implied a policy of armed intervention in the New World; it is true, indeed, that the French minister expressly disclaimed the use of force; but the theory which he propounded in this defense of his policy was a theory which could not fail to be entirely uncongenial to the public opinion of the United States. For behind the Monroe Doctrine, from the very first, had lain an antagonism to those shifting arrangements of interest on which the balance of power was based; and however innocent might be the methods employed for the moment to promote the idea of an American equilibrium, the idea itself was naturally repugnant to the people of the rising republic of North America. In an era of self-confident nationalism, it was naturally a little galling to be regarded, not as the dominant nation of the New World, but as only one element in an American balance of power.

Perkins goes on to review the American reaction exemplified by the Washington Union and the Democratic Review. While admitting that both were administration organs, he concludes that their vehement criticism of Guizot probably influenced Polk.⁴⁹

Stressing the unsavory connotation of the balance of power doctrine, Perkins accepts completely the interpretation of the Union and the Democratic Review that Guizot

⁴⁹Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, pp. 72-74.

was advocating an "American balance of power." Frederick Merk has taken Perkins to task on this account, criticizing his dependence upon partisan polemics. It was only in American expansionist journals, Merk insists, that Guizot was presented as advocating that the Old World principle of a power balance should be applied to the New. Merk reviews the assessments of the speech in the correspondence of the American minister at Paris, William Rives, in the French press, both conservative and opposition, in the London Times, and in American Whig papers. None found Guizot advocating an "American balance of power."⁵⁰ While Perkins emphasizes the upsurge of "Manifest Destiny" feeling after the Guizot speech, Merk claims that "this reverses the actual order of events, which was that Manifest Destiny advocates were using a phrase attributed to Guizot for their own purposes."⁵¹

To demonstrate further that it is fallacious to interpret Guizot as pressing for an "American balance of power," Merk reviews the speech itself. He concludes that Guizot chose his phrases with care:

They included "équilibre des forces" between the great masses which divide America, so that no one of them become exclusively predominant; "équilibre des divers États"; and "équilibre des grandes forces politique en Amérique." "Équilibre" was a general term meaning balance, a condition, natural and even beneficial. It was the opposite in political affairs of domination by a single power over a continent or a world.

⁵⁰Merk, The Monroe Doctrine and Expansionism, pp. 52-53.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 60-61.

Furthermore, Merk notes, "balance of power" in French is équilibre européens; nowhere did Guizot use équilibre américain.⁵²

While only two authors have examined the Guizot speech, several deal with Polk's annual message. But because during the intervening months American expansion had turned toward the Pacific, interpretations of Polk's declaration have varied. A few historians see Polk's revival of Monroe's principles as caused by new threats, both French and British, on the West Coast. Perkins is the only one of this group to discuss Guizot's policy announcement and to assert that Polk was replying to the insidious doctrine of an "American balance of power." Nevertheless, his work is similar to that of the others included in this grouping--all of whom are influenced by expansionist propaganda, in spite of its partisan nature. A second viewpoint, most clearly illustrated by Reeves, is that Polk was plotting to acquire California, and consequently reiterated the Monroe Doctrine to gain popular support. More recently, historians have clarified the relationship of California to the "Polk Doctrine," and have emphasized the political background of his December message.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 49-51.

In his innovative study of American diplomacy during the administration of Tyler and Polk, Reeves is unmoved by the claim, so prevalent among the advocates of expansion, that Polk's message was a warranted response to a very real danger. Instead, Reeves asserts that Polk "coveted California from his entrance into office. . .with Polk belongs the glory, if glory it be, of the Mexican War and of the conquest of California."⁵³ According to Reeves, Polk's instructions to John Slidell, the newly appointed representative to Mexico, are proof of his dishonorable diplomacy. These directives dwelt first on the rumored designs of France and Britain upon Mexican territory, and Reeves writes, they "are the key-note to Polk's aggressive policy of expansion."⁵⁴ Turning to the December message, Reeves makes no mention of Guizot, or of an "American balance of power." He views the speech as primarily directed to Oregon and the dispute with Britain. Nonetheless, he suggests that in order to gain additional popular backing, Polk "'re-affirmed' the Monroe Doctrine, with an eye as much to California and the fine bay of San Francisco, as to Oregon."⁵⁵

⁵³Reeves, Diplomacy Under Tyler and Polk, p. 189.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 275.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 258.

Although Polk had received reports from the American consul in California, Thomas O. Larkin, "that Great Britain and France had evident designs upon the province," Reeves doubts the validity of these warnings. Rather, he continues, they were only a pretense to bolster Polk's determination to acquire California regardless of the means.⁵⁶

This caustic treatment of Polk's California policy is countered by Eugene I. McCormac in his 1922 biography of the ninth president. McCormac asserts that California was not a sine qua non to Polk's diplomacy; if it had not been for the efforts of Britain and France to usurp Mexican sovereignty in California, then the United States would not have been driven to acquire it. To be sure, McCormac adds, Polk was not immune to the lure of the West Coast. But "rumors of British and French designs on California induced Polk to take early steps to prevent their success." Thus, McCormac writes, Polk "told Congress that certain European nations, in order to check the territorial expansion of the United States, were attempting to extend to America the 'balance-of-power' doctrine which had been long maintained in Europe."⁵⁷ As a biographer, McCormac tends

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 278-281.

⁵⁷Eugene Irving McCormac, James K. Polk: A Political Biography (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1922), pp. 391, 692-693.

to sympathize with his subject.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, he makes no further reference to Franco-American relations.

J. Fred Rippy also asserts that Polk's speech was a justified reaction to European lust for California. To Rippy, the threat of European interference in California signified more than just the possible transfer to territory. Because Europe was monarchial and conservative, the acquisition of California by the United States was unmistakably necessary. To support this claim, Rippy refers indirectly to the "undemocratic principles" articulated by Guizot.⁵⁹

Perkins expands upon Rippy's interpretation and emphasizes its importance to an understanding of Franco-American relations. From our review of the interpretation given by Perkins to the Guizot speech, what that author has to say about Polk's message should come as no surprise. According to Perkins, Guizot's principles, if left unchallenged, threatened the security of the United States. He writes:

⁵⁸Of the decision to send General Zachary Taylor across the Nueces River, McCormac writes: "It was certainly the duty of the President to defend Texas." Ibid., pp. 38-381.

⁵⁹J. Fred Rippy, The United States and Mexico (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931), pp. 29.

The Guizot doctrine of the balance of power in the New World, (if it be not unfair to call by the name of Guizot a doctrine not uncommonly held by many others), was a doctrine dangerous to the peace of the American continents. It ought to have been challenged, and so far as the United States was concerned, repudiated.

Because the December speech came in the midst of the Oregon dispute, Polk's bold reply to Guizot would seem to have been risky, if not foolhardy. A crisis with France might have led to an Anglo-French accord directed against the United States. "But in answer to this," Perkins hastens to add, "it can be pointed out that the risks of any very serious breach with France were decidedly not great." Because there "existed in France a very friendly feeling . . . for the United States, . . . the American government would have had to go much further than to dispute what was after all a theoretical principle, however dangerous, before a genuine tension in Franco-American relations would result."⁶⁰

By detailing the Paris reaction to the Polk message, Perkins establishes that the American president was indeed replying to the French minister. On January 12, 1846, Guizot again spoke in the Chambers. Perkins writes:

⁶⁰Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, pp. 96-98.

. . .[Guizot] amplified and expanded his views of American policy and his doctrine of the balance of power, and directly challenged the President's doctrine. The two great races of the New World, the Spanish and the English, he declared, must not be permitted one to absorb the other, and in particular, the southern Catholic race must not be devoured by the Anglo-American. The doctrine of the balance of power, he went on, in language which sounds a little grotesque to the generation which remembers the balance of power of 1914, had been the source of the development, the prosperity, the moral and social greatness of Europe, and would be equally salutary in the New World. . . with regard to the United States the French prime minister made his viewpoint clear. The relations of the United States with France, he declared, were entirely friendly; France, far from looking with regret upon the rising greatness of the new republic of the West, applauded it.

With this outline of French concern for events in the New World, Perkins notes, Guizot went on to declare that he could not accept the idea that Europe should be barred from exercising any political action in the New World.⁶¹

Significantly, Perkins denies that Polk's speech was an accurate appraisal of European aims in the New World. Of the problems that had stimulated the speech, Perkins writes, "it is worth noting that one, Texas, had been settled; that another, California, existed only in the President's imagination; . . . and that the third, Oregon, was finally composed without reference to what Polk had to say." Furthermore, Perkins notes, the support accorded

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 114-115.

the speech was largely partisan.⁶² And yet, in spite of the fact that much of what gave Polk cause for concern was illusory, and in spite of its obvious partisan background, Polk's address, Perkins claims, punctuated the conflicting interests of Washington and Paris in the New World. When Guizot replied to Polk in January of 1846, the dichotomy between French and American goals was clearly defined. Perkins writes: "It was Guizot. . .who, first of all European statesmen, denounced the pretension of the United States to the hegemony of the New World in a public address."⁶³

Historians writing after Perkins have reinforced his assertion that the problem of European intervention in California was imaginary. Furthermore, where Perkins speaks but briefly about the political aspects of Polk's speech, subsequent historians have stressed the acrimonious partisanship of the forties, in which the December speech played a significant role. Frederick Merk, as seen above, goes so far as to challenge Perkins's assumption that Polk was correct when he interpreted Guizot as advocating an "American balance of power." Nevertheless, Perkins's interpretation that the Guizot-Polk exchange symbolized an ideologically inspired breach in Franco-American relations

⁶²Ibid., p. 120.

⁶³Ibid., p. 117.

remains intact. Historians have generally accepted his view that, regardless of Polk's immediate motives, the December speech was representative of the conflict between the New and Old Worlds.

Prior to Perkins, a few authors had dealt with European aims in California. E.D. Adams, for example, discounted the British involvement in that Mexican province as being greatly exaggerated. Aside from being indifferent to colonial expansion, the Peel government had close ties with Mexico and was basically ignorant of California. For these reasons, Adams writes, the British attitude toward the province was one of "consistent passivity."⁶⁴ George Rives does not view the British as being so indifferent to California, but he notes that any designs of London were still-born because of the French policy of keeping "in accord with the United States."⁶⁵ Likewise, St. George Leakin Sioussat believes that the lack of French support frustrated any potential British effort in California.⁶⁶ Thus, even before Perkins wrote, there was a belief that a European threat in California was minimal.

⁶⁴Adams, British Interests and Activities in Texas, p. 264.

⁶⁵Rives, "Mexican Diplomacy on Eve of War with the United States," pp. 286-298.

⁶⁶St. George Leakin Sioussat, "James Buchanan," in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, ed. by Samuel F. Bemis, Vol. V (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), p. 271.

It was not until 1945, however, that the European involvement in California began to come into clearer light. Relying on extensive research into the records of French activities in California, Abraham P. Nasatir supplies by far the best review of French policy in the province. In his view, the French interest in the West Coast of North America was exemplified by the expedition of Eugene Duflot de Mofras in 1841-1842. "There can be little doubt," he writes, "that France, in sending Mofras as an agent to collect information about the Pacific region entertained hopes similar to those of England and the United States--that California might fall into her possession."⁶⁷ But France was forced to be discreet, awaiting a favorable opportunity.⁶⁸ By 1844, Nasatir asserts, Paris realized that the United States and Great Britain were the two powers most likely to secure California. And since France had other interests in the Pacific--interests most endangered by an expansion of British power--she preferred California, if it could not belong to France, to fall to the United States.⁶⁹

Drawing from American and European manuscript material as well as from Nasatir, Norman A. Graebner provides a superior account of the international rivalry for California

⁶⁷Abraham P. Nasatir, French Activities in California (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1945), p. 15.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 8.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 15-16.

and its relations to the Guizot-Polk exchange. He, too, discredits French aspirations in California: "French hopes in California faded first, if they existed beyond the minds of a few enthusiasts. France possessed no special claims to the region, nor did her power and interests in the Pacific equal those of Great Britain and the United States." Graebner agrees with Nasatir that Paris feared a British victory in the contest for California.⁷⁰ He is also in accord with earlier historians, especially Adams, for he doubts that either France or Britain would have acted with conviction in California. He writes:

British and French diplomacy, which became so grand in its pretensions and so disillusioning in its eventual failure, ended finally as little more than a tribute of commercially minded powers to the grandeur of California and the growing importance of the Pacific Ocean. . . . neither government ever revealed any true imperialism toward the Mexican province. . . . Frenchmen who knew California coveted it to the end, but they never inaugurated any policy. . . . that might have acquired it.⁷¹

Graebner makes his most important contribution to the historiography of Franco-American relations when he connects the French frustration in failing to influence events in California, as well as Texas, to Guizot's June speech. By 1845, both France and Britain, he writes, "had turned

⁷⁰Norman A. Graebner, Empire on the Pacific: A Study in American Continental Expansion (New York: The Ronald Press, 1955), pp. 74-75.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 81.

jaundiced eyes toward the United States, for American expansionism threatened to encompass the bay [of San Francisco] and destroy the balance of Pacific commerce."⁷² In a 1953 article, Graebner refers to a dispatch sent by Alphonse Pageot, the French ambassador at Washington, to Guizot, in which the representative "thought it time to protest against American arrogance which threatened the 'balance of forces in this hemisphere.' He believed that the American spirit of usurpation could 'endanger the peace of the world,' if not restrained in time by serious warning." Upon receipt of Pageot's anxious observations, Graebner continues, Guizot declared in front of the Chambers: "'It behooves France to preserve the balance of power in the Western Hemisphere.'"⁷³

In their assessments of the intent of Guizot's pronouncement, Perkins and Graebner differ. Perkins, as we have seen, views the American criticism of Guizot's speech as not unjustified.⁷⁴ Graebner, however, believes the reaction of the American expansionist press to be mistaken. Even if it be only through diplomacy, Graebner writes,

⁷²Ibid., p. 66.

⁷³Graebner, "American Interest in California, 1845," Pacific Historical Review, XXII (February, 1953), p. 19.

⁷⁴Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, p. 72.

these expansionists, [Graebner here refers in part to the same editors quoted by Perkins] ironically, never understood that the European inclination to interfere in American affairs resulted largely from a fear of this nation's apparent continental ambitions. The mushroom growth of American acquisitiveness toward California in 1845 was actually more alarming to European observers than the annexation of Texas. But these natural British and French reactions toward American expansionism merely aggravated the American desire to annex California. European intervention seemed to threaten the moral growth of the nation and endanger the entire concept of the Monroe Doctrine.⁷⁵

Where Perkins sees a threat inherent in Guizot's doctrine of American equilibrium, Graebner sees an understandable concern. But both authors agree that the American response to this concern, whatever its intent, signified an ideological division between the Old and New Worlds.

Subsequent to Graebner's work, Frederick Merk makes the only significant contribution to the historiography of the Guizot-Polk exchange. We have already seen that Merk criticizes the one-sidedness of Perkins's evidence. Like Graebner, Merk emphasizes the partisan background of the "Polk Doctrine." Merk, however, is more explicit on the subject. Indeed, he views the Polk message as a virtual campaign document, and in doing so he is reminiscent of Reeves. Of the motives of Polk in reasserting Monroe's principles, Merk writes:

⁷⁵Graebner, Empire on the Pacific, p. 88.

When Polk began preparation of his message to Congress in the autumn of 1845, he was unquestionably aware of all this newspaper discussion of the "balance-of-power" idea. The Washington Union, his daily fare, was filled with the subject. . . . Newspaper propaganda is not normally lifted into state papers, and yet how could a President who had employed it to such advantage in his election and had seen it so usefully employed afterwards fail to use it? The magic phrase "balance-of-power" occurred thrice in brief space in the message, as if to make sure that it be remembered. It was, indeed, remembered. Thereafter, it was used by Democrats incessantly to suggest that European monarchs were intent on keeping the American world divided.⁷⁶

Merk further resembles Reeves when he assesses the role played by California in stimulating Polk to expand the principle of the two spheres to exclude even diplomatic intervention. In order to secure California, as well as to solve the Oregon dispute and the Mexican boundary question, Merk writes, "what could be more useful than to remind Americans of meddling and 'balance-of-power' tactics employed by European monarchs in the recent past as a protection against their use in the future?"⁷⁷

As further evidence that Polk misinterpreted Guizot in crediting him as advocating an "American balance of power," Merk examines the debate between Guizot and Thiers during January of 1846. Perkins uses this debate as final proof of Guizot's devotion to a principle inimical to American interests. But, according to Merk, Thiers never

⁷⁶Merk, The Monroe Doctrine and Expansionism, p. 60.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 64.

accused Guizot of supporting an "équilibre américaine"; furthermore, Guizot translated Polk's phrase "balance of power" as "'ce qu'on appelle en Europe la balance des pouvoirs entre les États."⁷⁸ True, this may seem picayunish. But Merk has at least demonstrated that what Polk meant when he referred derisively to the phrase "balance of power" was something entirely different from what Guizot intended.

The significance of Merk's interpretation of Guizot's speech is illustrated by two historians who published before Merk and who revert to the Perkins viewpoint. In a summary of French policy towards the United States, Henry Blumenthal writes that Paris sought to "check" American expansion, using as evidence Guizot's speech.⁷⁹ Along the same lines Glyndon G. Van Deusen claims that Polk was troubled not only by the Oregon dispute and the vulnerability of California, but also by "the declaration by French Premier Francois Guizot that it was in the interest of France to preserve the existing balance of power in the New World."⁸⁰ Both authors view Guizot's speech as proof that France hoped to hinder the growth of the United States. That the Guizot ministry was upset by American expansionism is obvious,

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 88-91.

⁷⁹Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, p. 36.

⁸⁰Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, pp. 217-218.

but to claim, using Guizot's June declaration as a sole support, that France sought to prevent the acquisition of territory by the United States is misleading.

It has been suggested that Merk and Reeves are similar in that both authors interpret Polk's December message as a campaign document. Polk's most recent biographer, Charles Sellers, reaffirms this viewpoint, challenging the idea that Guizot's speech and the European involvement in California directly prompted Polk to revive the Monroe Doctrine. Sellers claims that Polk, upon his inauguration, already possessed a "continental vision" that included California. The conversation with Bancroft has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, and in reference to Polk's dedication to the acquisition of California, Sellers asserts that the annual message was a fundamental step in the process that fused the traditional agrarian expansionism of the United States with the new force of commercial expansionism. According to Sellers, Polk was "superbly fitted" to direct the drive to the Pacific. He writes:

. . . [Polk] had the political genius to sense the latent strength of the continentalist impulse and the political audacity and skill to chart the series of declarations and actions by which he committed the country to an continentalist course, and in response to which the continentalist impulse became manifest and overwhelming.⁸¹

⁸¹Sellers, Polk, pp. 213-214.

The significance of the annual message, then, cannot be ignored. Polk practiced the Jacksonian theory of presidential leadership, Sellers writes, "more systematically than any other nineteenth-century president." Fundamental to this theory was the principle of presidential initiative in the legislative process, the primary instrument of which was the annual message. Sellers writes:

Thus a President who was attuned to the public mood--as John Quincy Adams had not been in a notable earlier effort at presidential initiative--could make the annual message a powerful instrument for crystallizing national opinion behind his measures and bringing it to bear on a distracted or even hostile Congress.

Although Polk made no direct references to California in his speech, Sellers concludes that "the thought of California was interwoven with every word of his arresting warning that 'any European interference on the North American Continent' would be resisted by the United States 'at any and all hazards.'" Sellers adds that Polk received overwhelming bipartisan support for his message.⁸²

For the most part, historians have consistently moved away from the idea that European interests in the New World threatened the American democracy and as such warranted the acquisition of Texas and California. Adams, Smith, and Rives, in spite of their faults, have established that

⁸²Ibid., pp. 324-326.

the "Diplomatic Act," so suspect in the eyes of Americans, was stillborn. The historians of the Texas republic have further demonstrated that the Texan leadership of Houston and Jones played upon American suspicions of Europe to advance the cause of annexation. Furthermore, beginning with Reeves and Adams, and including Nasatir and Graebner, it has been shown that fear of European intrigue in California was chimerical. It is clear, then, that neither France nor Britain seriously planned to thwart the continental expansion of the United States. To be sure, both London and Paris hoped to preserve Texan independence. The two also had some interest in the fate of California. Still, nowhere did France or Britain present a challenge to American interests. For this reason, recent historians have differed with Perkins's interpretation that Guizot's June speech endangered American interests in the New World and therefore warranted Polk's strident revival of Monroe's principles. Perkins himself noted the partisan background of Polk's annual message. Graebner, Merk, and Sellers have emphasized this point even more. In the process, Reeves's early denunciation of Polk's plot to acquire California has come into new focus. Sellers has also placed the December message within the context of Polk's contribution to the development of presidential leadership. Nevertheless, Perkins has not been totally

repudiated. In his belief that the Guizot-Polk exchange signified an ideologically inspired dichotomy between the interests of France and the United States in the New World, Perkins has been upheld. Although Polk's motives have been clarified, although Guizot's speech has been re-defined, it cannot be denied that the bumptious expansion of American republicanism conflicted with the predilections of the government of Louis Philippe. But because the expansion of the United States did not threaten the security of France, but only offended the sensibilities of the July Monarchy, Guizot's desire to limit the American advance was not matched by a determination to implement it.

French policy towards the Oregon question and the outbreak of war between Mexico and the United States, as well as the American response to renewed Anglo-French military intervention in the La Plata region of South America, offer an insight into the quality of Franco-American relations in the aftermath of the Guizot-Polk exchange. During 1846, all three of these issues reached a crucial point. But Paris remained neutral towards the Oregon dispute and the Mexican War, and Washington in effect ignored events in the La Plata area.

French abstention from involvement in the Oregon question first attracted the attention of George Vern Blue. Relying upon dispatches between the French minister in

Washington, Pageot, and Guizot, Blue demonstrates that although both were offended by American belligerency, Guizot was adamant that France must not intervene. In reply to Pageot's suggestion that France should offer arbitration, Blue quotes Guizot as writing the following:

On a special question of Oregon we warmly desire that a pacific solution take place; for it would be doubly regrettable if the peace of the world were threatened by such a matter, and we are in any case firmly decided to keep the most complete neutrality as long as it will be possible for us to do so.⁸³

Blue concludes that the French were uninterested in the Oregon issue, for no French policies were immediately at stake. Agreeing with Blue, two more recent authors have also asserted that the French policy of neutrality contributed to the peaceful solution of this dispute.

John S. Galbraith maintains that a contributing factor in London's Oregon policy was its concern for relations with France. British statesmen, Galbraith writes, "could not ignore the possibilities of conflict with European states, in particular with France, as a concomitant to war with the United States." The entente with France was so weak, Galbraith continues, that "hatred of Britain, evident in the speeches of French politicians and in the tone of the French press, might force the government of Louis

⁸³George Vern Blue, "France and the Oregon Question," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXIII (1933), pp. 149-150.

Philippe into war and that war fever in France would mount if Britain were to be drawn into conflict with the United States."⁸⁴

Galbraith's assertions are based upon thorough research into British records, and his article is revealing of Anglo-French relations. Over the objections of his foreign minister, Aberdeen, Sir Robert Peel remained distrustful of France. The possibility that war with the United States would involve war with France did not cause Peel to retreat before the American bluster, Galbraith notes. "Such considerations, however, compelled him to seek peaceful agreement with the United States if it could be attained without the sacrifice of prestige."⁸⁵

Henry Blumenthal ventures beyond Galbraith to assert that "Britain's suspicion of France. . . was the decisive factor in its final disposition of the Oregon question." But Blumenthal also considers the impact of the Oregon dispute upon Franco-American relations. In his view, the French attitude toward Oregon was similar to that taken toward Texas and California. Guizot interpreted the slogan "54'40" or fight" as another example of American acquisitiveness. But, Blumenthal notes, the French minister was trammelled by domestic opinions. Thus, "unable to act

⁸⁴John S. Galbraith, "France as a Factor in the Oregon Negotiations," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XLIV (April, 1953), pp. 69-70.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 72.

with determination and forcefulness, he announced that France would be neutral in case of an Anglo-American war." Blumenthal adds, however, that "This premature neutrality declaration had serious consequences." Not only did Guizot demonstrate to both Britain and the United States that France could not be counted on, but he also further alienated the United States from France. It is Blumenthal's opinion that upon the sudden termination of the Oregon dispute, "the Pacific triumph of Polk's administration did not help endear 'neutral' France to the United States."⁸⁶ Blumenthal's support for this assertion is weak, but until further research is done on the matter, his work remains the only general review of the impact of the Oregon question upon Franco-American relations.

Unlike Oregon, French interest in Mexico was strong. Historians are agreed, however, that France did nothing to offend the United States during the Mexican War. Elizabeth Brett White points out that although Paris bolstered its squadron in the Gulf of Mexico, little concern was shown in the United States. It was only in cooperation with England that France would undertake any important operations.⁸⁷ Throughout the war, France remained devoted to her position

⁸⁶Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, pp. 42-43.

⁸⁷White, American Opinion of France, pp. 113-114.

of neutrality. According to Sioussat, this had a favorable effect upon American opinion. The significant fact of the Mexican War, he writes, "was the abstention of the British and French Governments from any attempts at intervention or interference."⁸⁸

After the settlement of the Oregon issue, Blumenthal asserts, any chance for a united Anglo-French intervention in the Mexican War was negated. Still, he adds, the French government begrudgingly declared its neutrality. "Even after his 'defeat' in Texas," Blumenthal writes, Guizot "continued to make some half-hearted efforts to organize a great European coalition to block the United States from overrunning Mexico." Despite reassuring pledges to the American minister early in 1846, Blumenthal notes, Louis Philippe's "government was really still undecided in June of 1846 as to its policy in the Mexican War." The cumulative effects of the Oregon decision and the impressive early successes of the American army, however, prompted France to proclaim its neutrality.⁸⁹

In contrast to Blumenthal, Frederick Merk emphasizes that French neutrality in the Mexican War was due to public enmity towards the British. Although French public opinion of the Mexican War was sharply divided, Merk

⁸⁸Sioussat, "Buchanan," p. 282.

⁸⁹Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, pp. 43-44.

writes, opposition journals made it clear "that if a choice must be made between hegemony by the United States and hegemony by the British, they preferred the former. They exhibited, in general, antipathy for their British partner in the entente cordiale."⁹⁰ In addition to French domestic opinion, Merk notes, joint Anglo-French intervention in the Mexican War was also hindered by British suspicion concerning French dynastic relations with Spain.⁹¹

That the "Polk Doctrine" was proclaimed to further American continental expansion rather than intended as a principle to guide American diplomacy is illustrated by the American attitude regarding renewed intervention in the La Plata region. In the heady aftermath of Polk's speech, Senator William Allen, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, introduced a resolution which was directed against the resumption of European intervention in the La Plata. Lewis Cass, a Democratic colleague of Allen, claimed that the resolution merited support because of its condemnation of Guizot's balance of power principles.⁹² While Polk for the most part had omitted South America in his declaration, the Allen resolution purported

⁹⁰Merk, The Monroe Doctrine and Expansionism, p. 167.

⁹¹Ibid., pp. 178-181.

⁹²Ibid., pp. 98-99.

to extend his doctrine to all of the New World. Significantly, historians have used the defeat of Allen's proposal to cast light upon Franco-American relations regarding the La Plata affair.

In her review of the debate over the Allen resolution, White stresses its significance to Franco-American relations. Although opposed to the resolution, Calhoun "strongly objected to the 'improper interference' of the European powers in American affairs. . . . But he did not think it possible that the United States could take under her guardianship the whole family of American states." The Allen resolution was defeated, but White adds that Calhoun's indignation at the overt intervention was typical of American opinion. In the end, she concludes, French efforts in the La Plata only further prejudiced Americans against France.⁹³

The official attitude of the United States towards the La Plata incursion was first outlined by Sioussat. "In contrast with its vigorous opposition to British or European expansion or interference in Texas, in Oregon, in California," he writes, "Polk's administration did not see fit to attempt to prevent European intervention in the affairs of these South American nations."⁹⁴ Subsequent historians have agreed

⁹³White, American Opinion of France, pp. 116-118.

⁹⁴Sioussat, "Buchanan," pp. 314-315.

with Sioussat that Polk's use of Monroe's principles was directed towards securing American in North America and was not intended to challenge French or British efforts elsewhere.

Nevertheless, John F. Cady asserts that the La Plata affair had some impact upon Polk as he prepared his December message. But Polk's diplomacy was shrewd, Cady adds, for when he asserted that all American states had a right, because of their sovereignty and independence, to be free from foreign interference, he was merely showing a token interest in the affairs of South America. By the feeble warning "that the people of the United States could not be indifferent to. . .violations of the sovereign rights of these states," Cady writes, "Polk thus avoided committing his government to any policy." Furthermore, Cady notes, Polk instructed his envoy to Argentina that although "existing circumstances" prevented American involvement in behalf of the beseiged Argentinian nation, the "moral influence" of the United States would be used. Polk assumed this noncommittal attitude, Cady claims, in spite of the unanimous condemnation by the American press of the operation of French and British forces in the La Plata, and in the face of accusations of foreign "machinations."⁹⁵

⁹⁵Cady, Intervention in the Rio de la Plata, pp. 182-185.

Perkins also believes that Polk's mention of the right of American nations to be free from foreign interventions was a response to affairs in the La Plata region.⁹⁶ But while Cady is critical of Polk's polite deference to South America--he goes so far as to accuse Polk of conniving to secure the unopposed expansion of the United States--Perkins merely writes that "the Polk administration. . . remained for the most part extraordinarily indifferent to what was going on in La Plata."⁹⁷

A summary view of Washington's policy regarding the resumption of hostilities in La Plata is found in Harold Peterson's recent work. Like White, Peterson outlines the considerable clamor in the United States for intervention. But, he writes, "In his eagerness to avoid war. . . over Oregon and to forestall Anglo-French opposition to his dreams of expansion in the southwest, Polk had no intention of forcing a showdown over the faraway La Plata. . . . The Polk administration was facing west, not south."⁹⁸

It is clear, then, that the July Monarchy made a

⁹⁶Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, p. 84.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 133.

⁹⁸Harold F. Peterson, Argentina and the United States, 1810-1960 (New York: State University of New York Press, 1964), pp. 137-138.

conscious effort to avoid any involvement prejudicial to American interests in the Oregon question and the Mexican War. It is also clear that the Polk administration, in spite of popular criticisms, allowed France and Britain to continue their efforts in the La Plata without interference. Still, Guizot was uneasy over the prospect of further American expansion. But Texas, and to some extent California, were the central issues in Franco-American relations during the mid-forties. The French government had failed to preserve Texas independence, in part due to Mexican ineptitude--there was little reason, then, for Paris to assist the Mexicans in regaining Texas in the face of American military might. Furthermore, whatever designs the July Monarchy had on California had long been given up, and Oregon had never been a matter of concern for France. By the middle of 1846, Paris had resigned itself to continental expansion of the United States, and Washington, anxious to consolidate that expansion, sought to avoid further difficulties with Europe, even at the expense of South American republics.

CHAPTER V

FRANCO-AMERICAN RIVALRY IN HAWAII AND THE FAR EAST

Three short years after the controversial annexation of Texas, the United States had acquired the vast Southwest, upper California, and Oregon. The westward impulse, however, did not stop at the ocean's edge. The expansion of the United States to the west coast of North America stimulated American interest in the central and east Pacific, marking the beginning of a new era in the struggle for the control of the fabled Far Eastern trade.¹ Speaking before Congress in 1847, President James K. Polk defined the real significance of the acquisition of California by the United States. The bay of San Francisco and the other harbors along the coast of California, Polk predicted, "would in a short period become the marts of an extensive and profitable commerce with China and other countries in the Far East."²

¹See Robert G. Cleland, "Asiatic Trade and American Occupation of the Pacific Coast," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, Vol. I (Washington, 1916), p. 289.

²"Annual Message," Congressional Globe, December 7, 1847, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Part I, p. 6.

But American eyes turned first to the Hawaiian archipelago-- the hub of Pacific commerce and a temptation to the world's two other great maritime powers, France and Great Britain.

American policy towards Hawaii was first defined in 1842. For several years prior to that date, Hawaii had been the scene of numerous interventions, intrigues, and assorted coercive acts. French, British, and American warships had frequently anchored in Honolulu's serene harbor. By 1842, the native Hawaiian government, fearful lest the islands should fall to one of the competing Pacific powers, determined that the time had come to insure its sovereignty. King Kamehameha III dispatched envoys to Washington, London, and Paris to secure recognition of Hawaiian independence. In response, President John Tyler, acting upon the advice of his Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, declared that the United States would respect Hawaiian sovereignty. Tyler reassured the Hawaiian diplomats that although the United States possessed the largest share of the kingdom's trade, it sought

no peculiar advantages, no exclusive control over the Hawaiian Government, but is content with its independent existence. . . . Its forbearance in this respect, under the circumstances of the very large intercourse of their citizens with the islands, would justify the Government, should events hereafter arise, to require it, in making a decided

remonstrance against the adoption of an opposite policy by any other power.³

Twelve years later, however, an American representative signed a treaty with the native Hawaiian government providing for the annexation of the islands by the United States.

The first, and largest, part of this chapter will be devoted to determining how historians have treated the apparent shift in American policy within the larger framework of Franco-American relations. To be precise: did French involvement in Hawaii have any impact upon American policy-makers in 1842 and in 1854? The second part of this chapter will be a brief review of the historiography of Franco-American relations with respect to China. By way of introduction, a summary of French and American interests and activities in Hawaii might be helpful before embarking on a study of the historiography. But rather than repeat a list of events, this writer will review the works of two early twentieth-century historians, emphasizing the more significant points.

In a 1901 examination of American involvement in the Pacific, James Morton Callahan touches upon many points

³Foreign Relations of the United States, 1894, Appendix, II (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1901), pp. 39-41.

vital to Franco-American relations regarding Hawaii. He recognizes that by the eighteen-thirties Protestant American missionaries of staunch New England stock had come to exert a potent influence upon the native Hawaiian government. Also, Callahan acknowledges that the French interest in the islands was founded upon an equally staunch Jesuit mission. Hence, when French Captain C.P.T. Laplace coerced Kamehameha III into an unfavorable treaty in 1838, he sought to protect both the Catholic mission and the interests of the government of Louis Philippe.⁴ Laplace's intervention was but one of a series by both France and Great Britain, which, Callahan asserts, caused Kamehameha to strive for the recognition of Hawaiian independence. The American response to the Hawaiian plea, Callahan tells us, was honorable. For despite the reports of progress in the islands and the increase of American involvement there, the United States sought no exclusive control or advantage. Even after learning of Kamehameha's voluntary cession of sovereignty to the British Admiral Lord Paulet in 1843, Callahan continues, Washington resorted

⁴Two later studies of American and French missionaries in Hawaii are Bradford Smith, Yankees in Paradise: The New England Impact on Hawaii (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1956), and Aarne A. Koskinen, Missionary Influence as a Political Factor in the Pacific Islands (Helsinki, 1953). Unfortunately, neither author sheds much light upon the role played by Hawaiian missionaries in Franco-American relations.

only to diplomatic retort. The United States, he notes, informed Britain and France of its hope that neither would violate Hawaiian sovereignty. According to Callahan, the American attitude helped persuade London and Paris to recognize Hawaiian independence by a joint declaration.⁵

Although Tyler subsequently refused to participate in the Anglo-French declaration guaranteeing Hawaiian independence, the Hawaiian government interpreted his 1842 statement, coupled with later assurances by Secretaries Abel P. Upshur and John C. Calhoun, as constituting recognition of the island kingdom. Thus assured, Hawaii hoped to enjoy normal relations with the competing Pacific powers. But further trouble soon arose. In 1849, French forces, upon the instigation of Consul Patrice Dillon, occupied Honolulu. Callahan neglects to assess the purpose of the intervention, but he does describe the American reaction.

According to Callahan, the administration of Zachary Taylor was apprehensive of French intentions in the Pacific. Tahiti had recently succumbed to an aggressive French effort, and Washington feared a similar occurrence in Hawaii.

⁵James Morton Callahan, American Relations in the Pacific and the Far East, 1784-1900, Johns Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science, Vol. XIX (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1901), pp. 115-117.

Secretary of State John Clayton, Callahan writes, informed William R. Rives at Paris "that, although the Hawaiian islands were not coveted by the United States, their relations were such that the United States could never with indifference allow them to pass under the dominion or exclusive control of any other power." France disavowed Dillon's actions and the crisis subsided. But in 1851, convinced that France was again considering the conquest of the islands, the Hawaiian government proposed annexation to the United States. Nevertheless, the Fillmore administration, Callahan claims, remained faithful to established Hawaiian policy and rejected the annexation offer. Secretary of State Webster did protest to France, however, and Paris, somewhat surprised by the American reaction, denied any intention of violating Hawaiian sovereignty.⁶

Hawaii became the cause for further discord between Paris and Washington upon the inauguration of President Franklin K. Pierce, a devotee of "Manifest Destiny." Secretary of State William L. Marcy, reflecting the tenor of Pierce's policy, instructed the American ambassador at Paris that it was inevitable that the Hawaiian archipelago would come under the control of the United States. In

⁶Ibid., pp. 119-120.

contrast to his earlier view that American respect for Hawaiian independence was established policy, Callahan justifies Marcy's intimation that he anticipated annexation. "While the United States had long expressed her policy of maintaining the independence of the Hawaiian islands," he writes, "she had never entered into any international agreement which would prevent her from negotiating a treaty of annexation with the Hawaiian government." In spite of vigorous French and British protests, Callahan asserts, negotiations for annexation continued and it was only the death of Kamehameha III late in 1854 that postponed Hawaiian entrance into the Union.⁷

Like Callahan, John W. Foster defends the American involvement in Hawaii. But while the United States pursued an honorable policy in Hawaii, Foster claims, the efforts of Britain and France to obtain an equal footing constituted aggression. His interpretation of events in Hawaii is based, at least in part, upon a devout belief in the righteous and beneficent efforts of the American missionaries.⁸ According to Foster, the American presence in Hawaii, founded upon the humanitarian missionary endeavors and supplemented by a long history of trade relations, was

⁷Ibid., pp. 121-123.

⁸John W. Foster, American Diplomacy in the Orient (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1903), pp. 106-109.

predominant. In spite of Tyler's affirmation of that belief and his announcement that the United States would not allow any other nation to control the islands, Foster continues, it "did not deter other powers from repeated efforts to secure their possession. Their commanding situation in the Pacific was a constant temptation to the greed of colonizing powers."⁹

Reviewing the intervention of Captain Laplace in 1838, Foster exceeds Callahan in the vigor of his criticism. Assuming that Laplace acted with explicit orders from Paris, he writes: "The third demonstration [the first two were British] of a foreign power against the sovereignty of Hawaii was on the part of France in 1839." To be sure, Foster adds, the Hawaiian king and his missionary advisors may have erred by expelling the Jesuit fathers, but this did not justify the Laplace intervention.¹⁰

After clearly identifying France as the aggressor in Hawaii, Foster then contrasts French policy with that of the United States. Like Callahan, he credits Tyler with frustrating French, as well as British, designs on Hawaii.¹¹ Foster further claims that the Whig administration of Taylor

⁹Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 119-121.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 122-123.

and Fillmore reaffirmed Tyler's stand, for they too defeated French dreams of an Hawaiian empire. During the Dillon affair, for example, the American government informed Paris that it would not allow France to occupy Hawaii. Relations between Paris and Washington underwent further strain when France sent Louis Perrin to Honolulu in 1850. According to Foster, Perrin had been instructed to renew pressures upon the Hawaiian government for concessions to France. This led Hawaii to turn to the United States for protection, suggesting the possibility of annexation. As a result, Foster concludes, the efforts of Perrin constituted the final attempt at aggression by a foreign power against the island kingdom.¹²

Callahan and Foster make one basic error that is crucial to the historiography of Franco-Americans regarding Hawaii. In their researches, they totally ignore French primary materials. They assume--neglecting even the revolutions of 1848 and the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon--that throughout the period between 1838 and 1851, the French government sought to acquire Hawaii. Consequently, both authors see France and the United States in clear opposition over Hawaii; the former dedicated to preserving Hawaiian independence, the latter seeking to supplement its empire. But what of the American attempt at annexation during the Pierce administration?

¹²Ibid., pp. 130-131.

Surely it would seem that Tyler's policy of respect for Hawaiian independence had been ignored? Foster fails to mention it, and Callahan claims that it was justified because of the threat of French aggression.

The various essays contained in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy cast little new light on Hawaii's role in Franco-American relations. Writing about Webster's first term, C.A. Duniway claims that the Hawaiian request for recognition of its independence provided but another occasion for Washington to assert its traditional principle of non-intervention. He notes, however, that "there was reason to fear at the time that European rivalries might lead to occupation and colonization which would be prejudicial to American commercial interests." Because the United States had more interest in the fate of the islands and their government than any other nation, Duniway maintains, American policy became two-fold. The sovereignty of the island kingdom must be respected, and their acquisition by any other power would be inimical to the interests of the American people.¹³

In his sketch on Calhoun, St. George Leakin Sioussat has supplied some details on the circumstances surrounding

¹³Clyde Augustus Duniway, "Daniel Webster," in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, ed. by Samuel F. Bemis, Vol. V (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), p. 56.

recognition. When it learned that the Hawaiian government had ceded its sovereignty to Paulet, the State Department remained silent, Sioussat explains, for discussions in progress in London soon made it evident that Great Britain would disavow his actions. But the Paulet matter also involved France, and during the subsequent negotiations between London and Paris, speculation arose regarding the American policy toward Hawaii. "In reply to an inquiry concerning the designs of the United States in the Sandwich Islands," Sioussat adds in a footnote, "our minister gave the assurance that our purposes in the Pacific were purely commercial."¹⁴ Sioussat does not specify if this disclaimer constituted an American commitment to Hawaiian independence.

In her essay on Clayton, Mary W. Williams affirms that the French intrusion into Hawaii in 1849 alarmed the United States. But unlike Callahan and Foster, Williams views the American response to the Dillon affair within the broader context of Franco-American relations. So it was, she suggests, that Clayton "warned the Dominican Republic that a French protectorate over it would not be 'pleasing' to the United States, and notified the French Government--when it was trying to coerce Hawaii over the question of extra-territoriality--that the United States would not

¹⁴Sioussat, "Calhoun," in ibid., pp. 223, 375.

with indifference permit the islands to pass under the dominion of another nation." Although Paris recalled Dillon, Williams notes that Washington took advantage of the affair to strengthen its ties with Hawaii.¹⁵

Concerning the American protest against renewed tension between Hawaii and France during the Perrin mission, Duniway, in an essay on Webster's second term, moderates the findings of Callahan and Foster. Webster did instruct his minister at Paris to insist that France refrain from making unjust demands upon the Hawaiian government. Furthermore, Duniway continues, Webster directed his commissioner in the islands "not to interfere by force in the Franco-Hawaiian controversy--but he need not explain this to the French." Still, the Fillmore administration did not interpret events in Hawaii as signifying a breach in relations with France. Duniway emphasizes that the United States later authorized its representatives in Hawaii to cooperate fully with the French and British to bring about stability in the islands.¹⁶

Unlike Callahan and Foster, Henry Barrett Learned recognizes the expansionist tenor of the Pierce administration. Pierce hoped to acquire both Cuba and Hawaii. For

¹⁵Williams, "Clayton," in ibid., Vol. VI, pp. 14-15.

¹⁶Duniway, "Daniel Webster," in ibid., pp. 108-109.

that reason, Learned states, his Secretary of State, Marcy, contemplated the annexation of Hawaii.¹⁷ Unfortunately, Learned sees no contrast between the Hawaiian policies of Tyler and Pierce. He also neglects to explain why annexation failed.

None of the authors of these essays rectifies the failure of Callahan and Foster to use French primary material. George Vern Blue demonstrates the importance of such sources to the historiography of Franco-American relations regarding Hawaii. Drawing from the archives of the Ministry of the Marine and the Quai d'Orsay, as well as from private correspondence, Blue establishes that French representatives in Hawaii often exceeded the letter of their instructions. At best, the government of Louis Philippe was apathetic towards the idea of establishing a colony in Hawaii founded upon the Catholic mission.¹⁸ In spite of the concessions made by the Hawaiian government to Laplace, the French presence in the islands continued to diminish. Captain Mallett attempted to revive it in 1842, but like Laplace he had no official support and his endeavor failed. This abortive effort was, according to

¹⁷Henry Barrett Learned, "William Learned Marcy," in ibid., pp. 147, 290-291.

¹⁸George Vern Blue, "The Project of a French Settlement in the Hawaiian Islands, 1824-1842," American Historical Review, II (1932), pp. 85-87.

Blue, "the final chapter to the story of the only French project that might have been the nucleus for a colonial establishment in the kingdom of the Kamehamehas."

Although French agents desired to regenerate enthusiasm for the idea after 1842, Blue finds no evidence of any official instructions to that effect.¹⁹ Blue does not deny, however, that the efforts of individual Frenchmen often raised speculation as to the aims of the French government.

Referring to Blue, as well as to his own extensive researches in British documents, Richard W. Van Alstyne argues that Great Britain was the only true guardian of Hawaiian independence. During the forties, and especially in the early fifties, he writes, "France, or at least the French representatives in Honolulu, hoped to bring the islands under her veiled control, and the United States aspired to annex them outright."²⁰ According to Van Alstyne, the American rejoinder to France in 1850, credited by some historians with causing France to retreat, was accompanied by a more persuasive protest from London. Britain reminded France, he writes, "that its policy was only calculated to destroy French influence in the islands and throw them into

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 89-96.

²⁰Richard W. Van Alstyne, "Great Britain, the United States, and Hawaiian Independence," Pacific Historical Review, IV (1935), p. 15.

arms of the United States." Paris apologized to London for the activities of its representatives, and suggested that a détente be reached in the form of a tripartite agreement with London and Washington over Cuba. To this, Van Alstyne claims, President Fillmore was sympathetic, further suggesting that the agreement be extended to Hawaii. But it all came to naught, for Fillmore met defeat in his bid for renomination.²¹

Not surprisingly, Van Alstyne is critical of the policy of the Pierce administration toward Hawaii. After 1843, he writes, "by tacit consent Hawaii was treated as a neutralized territory. . .and though Polk gave a nationalist twist to the American policy in his famous message of December 2, 1845, he did not essentially alter it."²² So when negotiations for annexation began in 1854, both France and Britain rightfully and vigorously protested. Although the eventual treaty contained provisions objectionable to the United States, Van Alstyne asserts that the Anglo-French protest did contribute to the failure of annexation. In response to this unified opposition against annexation, he writes, "Marcy could do nothing but complain helplessly of the British and French penchant for interfering with the

²¹Ibid., pp. 18-20.

²²Ibid., p. 16.

expansionist plans of the United States."²³

Van Alstyne's assertion that Anglo-French opposition to annexation had an impact upon the American government is supported by an earlier article. Concerned with Russo-American relations on the eve of the Crimean War, Frank A. Golder refers to a speech given by Lord Clarendon before Parliament. Clarendon's remarks, he writes, were "interpreted to mean that in the future England and France would take a more active part in American affairs than heretofore."²⁴ According to both Van Alstyne and Golder, Callahan's view that annexation failed because of the death of Kamehameha cannot be accepted without reference to the impact on the United States of Anglo-French opposition.

To this point, the historiography of Franco-American relations with respect to Hawaii has been piecemeal. Missing are both a general history of the Hawaiian kingdom and a detailed study of foreign involvement in the mid-Pacific. And although Blue, Van Alstyne, and Golder correct the earlier neglect of European sources, their works are but articles and as such suffer from a need to generalize. Neither Van Alstyne nor Golder, for example, attempt to explain how Anglo-French opposition could have dulled the energies of

²³Ibid., p. 22.

²⁴Frank A. Golder, "Russian-American Relations During the Crimean War," American Historical Review, XXI (April, 1926), pp. 463-464. Clarendon spoke in January, 1854, as the agitation for annexation was at a fever pitch.

"Young America" and forestalled annexation. Consequently, Ralph S. Kuykendall's history of Hawaii to 1854 is indeed important. In fact, Kuykendall's research is so complete that this chapter pivots around his work.

To begin, Kuykendall, although more explicit, reaffirms what Blue has written concerning the initial French involvement in Hawaii.²⁵ But while Blue dismisses the Laplace venture as unauthorized, Kuykendall asserts that the intervention had a long-term importance. He notes that Laplace pressed several demands upon the Hawaiian government which embittered Franco-American relations for many years. Not only did Laplace demand tolerance for the Catholic missionaries, but he further demanded a twenty thousand dollar guarantee that Kamehameha would honor this pledge. Reluctantly, Kamehameha also consented to lessen the duty on French spirits, and to allow certain extra-territorial rights for Frenchmen. These last two articles, Kuykendall points out, offended the king for they infringed on his sovereign power.²⁶ When the Hawaiian commissioners came to Paris in 1842 seeking recognition of the independence of their island kingdom, Guizot agreed to grant the request. But he insisted, Kuykendall

²⁵Ralph S. Kuykendall, The Hawaiian Kingdom, 1778-1854; Foundation and Transformation (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1938), pp. 138-141.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 165-166.

continues, that the disagreeable Laplace treaty remain in effect. Guizot's stubbornness disappointed the envoys, and continued resentment of the Laplace treaty eventually led to the crises of 1849-1851.²⁷

Kuykendall disagrees with the claim made by the earlier historians, excluding Van Alstyne, that Tyler's 1842 declaration persuaded France and Britain to respect Hawaiian independence. Before the American pronouncement, he notes, Aberdeen had determined to recognize the sovereignty of the Hawaiian government and to refrain from seeking an exclusive position for Britain in Hawaii. This decision, Kuykendall adds, was a direct response to the Laplace visit.²⁸

The early historians also assume that when Tyler and Webster formulated their Hawaiian policy, they were protecting an extensive and obvious American involvement in the islands. Kuykendall demonstrates, however, that the Tyler administration was at first indifferent to Hawaiian affairs, and that it required a calculated disclosure by the Hawaiian envoy to prod Webster into action. Referring to the notes taken by William Richards, one of the Hawaiian commissioners, Kuykendall writes:

²⁷Ibid., pp. 201-202.

Aside from the indication they give of Webster's initial lack of interest in Hawaii, the most significant thing in them is the revelation of Richards' purpose to place the islands under the protection of Great Britain in case he found it impossible to obtain recognition of their independence, and the evident effect of the revelation upon the American officials.²⁹

But when stimulated into action, the Tyler administration saw not only a British menace in the mid-Pacific, but possibly a French threat as well. Kuykendall quotes a dispatch which H.S. Fox, the British minister at Washington, sent to London, analyzing Tyler's speech. It is the opinion of the American government, Fox wrote, "that those islands ought not to be allowed to fall under the dominion of any Foreign Power. It is probable that this declaratory movement has been prompted by the colonization of New Zealand by Great Britain, and by the reported recent occupation of the Marquesas, and other islands in the Pacific, by a Naval Force from France."³⁰

When news of Paulet's seizure of Hawaii reached Europe and North America, London quickly disavowed his actions. But the British government, suspicious of French intentions in the Pacific and doubtful of the American attitude, hesitated to order Paulet's departure. "In view of the recent activity of the French in the Pacific and of the

²⁹Ibid., p. 194.

³⁰Ibid., p. 196.

special interest which the Americans had in the Hawaiian islands," Kuykendall writes, "the British government felt it necessary, before restoring those islands, to guard against the possibility of their falling, at some later time, into the possession of either France or the United States."³¹ Aberdeen hoped to use the Paulet episode to persuade France and the United States to agree to a tripartite recognition of the Hawaiian kingdom. Guizot, after consenting to join with Aberdeen, inquired into the American feeling regarding Aberdeen's proposal. Two secretaries of state, Kuykendall notes, signified their approval of the spirit of the plan. Upshur "showed himself disposed to accede to the proposition," and when France learned that the United States would not comply, Calhoun affirmed that the American acts constituted "'a full recognition on the part of the United States, of the independence of the Hawaiian government.'" With an eye to the troubles between France and Hawaii during the Taylor and Fillmore administrations, Kuykendall adds that it was unfortunate that the United States did not go the full route.³²

It is Van Alstyne's premise that Great Britain sought to protect Hawaii from French imperialism. Kuykendall repeats this idea. In his view, the efforts of French

³¹Ibid., p. 200.

³²Ibid., pp. 202-204.

consuls and naval officers between 1849 and 1851 to increase French influence in the islands, coupled with American westward expansion, relegated the independence of Hawaii once again to a state of uncertainty. The exuberant expansionism of the United States, first demonstrated by the acquisition of California and Oregon, and culminating with the "Manifest Destiny" agitation of the Pierce administration, led many Americans to desire Hawaii for the United States.³³

American interest in Hawaii, Kuykendall continues, was further stimulated by troubles between French representatives in Honolulu and the native government. He writes: "A factor of far-reaching importance was the aggressive policy of France as exemplified in the proceedings of French consular and naval officers in Hawaii. French pressure was a reagent, which, applied time after time, precipitated crisis after crisis."³⁴

The American reaction to the 1849 seizure of government buildings in Honolulu by Admiral de Tromelin, Kuykendall explains, was twofold. First, and here Kuykendall recalls Williams, ties with Hawaii were strengthened by an equitable commercial treaty. When news reached Secretary Clayton "of the outrage committed at Honolulu by the French Admiral

³³Ibid., p. 383.

³⁴Ibid., p. 388.

de Tromelin, at the instigation of Consul Dillon," Kuykendall writes, "this made the American government even more willing to take a friendly and protective attitude towards Hawaii."³⁵ Second, Clayton instructed William C. Rives at Paris to persuade France to yield. But as in 1843, Kuykendall notes with some regret, "the United States government, while determined to uphold the independence of Hawaii, was not prepared to enter into any treaty arrangement with France and Great Britain respecting the island kingdom."³⁶ Upon the receipt of American as well as British remonstrances, the French Foreign Minister rebuked Dillon. Finally, an accord was reached between French officials in Hawaii and the native government, but Kuykendall emphasizes that it only temporarily stilled the rumors of French aggression.³⁷

In a fashion similar to that used by Sam Houston and Anson Jones in Texas, Gerrit P. Judd dramatized the remote possibility of French hostilities against the Hawaiian kingdom. After meeting Perrin, Judd, a New England missionary prominent in the Hawaiian government, came to fear that France might resort to force to compel Hawaii to yield to her demands. Thus aroused, Kuykendall continues, Judd wrote to Lord Palmerston, the British Foreign Secretary,

³⁵Ibid., p. 379.

³⁶Ibid., p. 378.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 391, 403.

and to Clayton, urging that Great Britain and the United States protest to France and that British and American warships be sent to Honolulu to protect the island kingdom.³⁸ Webster had succeeded Clayton, and the new secretary voiced his concern to France. He instructed Rives to make such representations "'to the minister of foreign affairs of France as will induce that Government to desist from measures incompatible with the sovereignty and independence of the Hawaiian islands, and to make amends for the acts which the French agents have already committed there in contravention of the law of nations and of the treaty between the Hawaiian Government and France.'" In reply, Kuykendall writes, France "protested her entire innocence of any sinister designs on Hawaii. . .all that France wanted was equality of treatment with other nations." The Paris government further asserted that "the dignity of France had been wounded by the uncourteous manner in which the United States had intervened in the affair."³⁹

But in spite of these protestations and reassurances of good intentions, French efforts in Hawaii had a profound impact upon American opinion. Because "the proceedings of the French officers Dillon and De Tromelin were not disavowed

³⁸Ibid., pp. 398-399.

³⁹Ibid., p. 407.

by the French government and the assurances given by that government to the United States and Great Britain were not made public at that time," Kuykendall writes, "exaggerated reports and unfounded rumors ran about freely and created a widespread impression that France had some ulterior design upon the Hawaiian islands and only awaited a convenient opportunity to put it into execution."⁴⁰ As a result, any initiative that France may have possessed in Hawaiian affairs soon passed to the United States. With the upsurge of expansionist spirit embodied in the Pierce administration, many Americans pressed for the annexation of Hawaii. Inquiring into Washington's attitude toward this popular sentiment, the French and British ministers were reassured by Secretary Marcy that the United States had the same goals in Hawaii as their own governments. But, Kuykendall emphasizes, Marcy added that there were "causes which might render the continuance of that independence impracticable, as a consequence of which the government might fall into other hands." If it should come to this, Marcy continued, the American Congress and people would welcome them. Kuykendall suggests that Marcy was waiting for an invitation from Kamehameha before he promoted annexation.⁴¹

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 407-408.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 418-419.

When Hawaii, in response to new rumors of French ambitions, voluntarily placed herself under the auspices of the United States in 1853, the move for annexation began in earnest. Although fear of French aggression soon subsided in Hawaii, Kuykendall points out that reports continued to circulate in the United States that such a danger still existed.⁴² David L. Gregg, the newly appointed commissioner in Honolulu, began negotiations with the native government, ignoring the disappearance of the alleged French threat. In response, the French and British consuls forewarned Kamehameha of the unhappy consequences of American rule. When it became clear to the London and Paris governments that Gregg had been instructed to negotiate for annexation, they protested vigorously. Fundamental to their objections, Kuykendall states, was the not unmerited premise that three secretaries of state--Calhoun, Upshur, and Webster--had pledged the United States to respect Hawaiian independence.⁴³ After the eventual withdrawal of the treaty, Kuykendall notes, "several senators attributed the failure of the annexation project to the interference of Great Britain and France and spoke bitterly of the hostility of those governments to the foreign policies

⁴²Ibid., p. 412.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 423-425.

of the United States." Clayton, now a senator, took issue with their complaints. Clayton argued, Kuykendall continues, that the United States had been morally bound since 1843 to respect the independence of Hawaii.⁴⁴

In Kuykendall's opinion, then, annexation would never have succeeded, for the United States was committed to Hawaiian independence. Hence, France and Britain justifiably objected to annexation. Kuykendall does not credit the abandonment of annexation solely to British and French protests, however. As Van Alstyne points out, the treaty itself contained provisions objectionable to the United States; Kuykendall also sees some merit in Callahan's emphasis upon the impact of the death of Kamehameha III.⁴⁵ But Van Alstyne further asserts that Anglo-French protests had their effect, and Kuykendall agrees.

Published in the same year as Kuykendall's study, Clifford Gessler's paean to the beauty of Hawaii stands in contrast to the former's erudition. Gessler mentions the French effort in the islands, but is content to report the reactions of native Hawaiian and American missionaries. In his view, the American acquisition of Hawaii was

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 427.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 426-427. For a lucid account of the contrast between Kamehameha III and his successor, Kamehameha IV, see Osborne E. Hooley, "Hawaiian Negotiation for Reciprocity, 1885-1857," Pacific Historical Review, VII (1938), pp. 128-146.

inevitable; hence, opposition by France and Great Britain was futile. No power, Gessler writes, "can withstand the slow, quiet force of economic penetration. Industry had grown up, demanding markets; the American influence that had begun with the missionaries of 1820 became more and more important as it developed vested interest in the land and its products."⁴⁶ Gessler is mentioned only because he assumes that Hawaii was well within the American sphere; why this is important this writer will discuss later.

The influence of Kuykendall is clearly shown in the works of three later historians. That three students of international affairs in the mid-Pacific published their findings within seven years after Kuykendall gives credit to his effort. In 1941, Jean Ingram Brookes published a monograph on the international competition for islands in the Pacific; in 1942, Harold Whitman Bradley's review of the American role in Hawaiian history prior to 1843 appeared, followed a year later by his article summarizing the relation of the island kingdom to American expansion; and in 1945, Sylvester K. Stevens presented a monograph dealing with the history of Hawaiian-American relations from 1842 to 1898.

⁴⁶Clifford Gessler, Hawaii, Isles of Enchantment (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1938), pp. 81-82.

Two aspects of Brookes's study are of particular significance to the historiography of Franco-American relations regarding Hawaii. First, she clarifies the affinity of the government of Louis Philippe for the Catholic missionaries in the Pacific. And second, although she reiterates Kuykendall's interpretation of the impact of French efforts in Hawaii upon the United States, Brookes reaches a different conclusion regarding the failure of annexation.

It was during the eighteen-thirties, Brookes claims, that France became attentive to affairs in the Pacific. But Louis Philippe's government hesitated; the Pacific did not have the appeal in France that it had in Britain and the United States. Few agencies were available which France could use to develop a presence in that distant region.⁴⁷ Thus, Brookes states, the government of Louis Philippe, in spite of its bourgeois Protestantism, reached a sort of quid pro quo with the crusading Catholic missionaries. The efficacy of this entente between the secular and the clerical, was, according to Brookes, "demonstrated most spectacularly at this time at Hawaii and Tahiti, where the French missionaries had to cope with native governments more developed than the average, and with strong bodies of Protestant teachers, both American and British."⁴⁸

⁴⁷Jean Ingram Brookes, International Rivalry in the Pacific Islands, 1800-1875 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), p. 69.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 79.

Because Laplace found it necessary to resort to force in order to underwrite the mission in Hawaii, however, France realized her impotency in the Pacific. In order to compete effectively with the Americans and the British, Brookes writes, "French entrepreneurs would need not only naval protection, but the intelligent and open backing of their government, a first step in which would be the commissioning of consuls among the islands."⁴⁹ But when consuls Dillon and Perrin exhibited a determination to increase the French presence in Hawaii during the years 1849-1851, the Paris government could do little to assist them.⁵⁰ Domestic turmoil prevented France from actively supporting her representatives abroad. Unfortunately, Brookes neglects to mention this.

Reviewing the Dillon affair, Brookes adds some detail to Kuykendall's work. It is her view that the traditional Franco-American amity, invigorated by the 1848 revolution, mitigated Washington's response to Dillon's belligerency. To be sure, Clayton became alarmed and instructed his minister at Paris to protest. Still, Brookes continues, Rives found it necessary to assume a mild attitude, for "he sensed 'an undue anxiety' on the part of the British

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 89.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 191-193.

ambassador 'to put us forward in an insidious and delicate office that might compromise our friendly relations with France,' when after all it was Great Britain which had a declaration with France in 1843."⁵¹

But when in 1851 consul Perrin revived the demands on Kamehameha, Franco-American relations suffered. Again, Brookes does not depart from Kuykendall's findings. In fact, throughout her study, Brookes uses basically the same sources as Kuykendall. Webster instructed Rives, she writes, "to inform the government that the enforcement of such demands would be equivalent to the subjugation of the islands by France, and that such a step would disturb seriously the friendly relations then existing between the United States and France." Brookes also repeats Kuykendall's appraisal of the French reply to these protests.⁵²

Lest one thinks Brookes overly dependent upon Kuykendall, this writer will review what the former has to say about the movement for annexation during the Pierce administration. Before Marcy instructed his minister at Paris "to ascertain if possible what course France would eventually take if the United States were to add the Islands to her territories by means which were fair and peaceable," he was aware, Brookes

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 191-192.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 193-196.

states, that France would appose annexation. The French envoy at Washington, the author continues, had tried to give Marcy the impression that a transfer of Hawaiian sovereignty would be forcibly resisted. Brookes concludes, then, that Marcy knew that this project would arouse the disapproval of the other maritime powers. Still, he doubted that either France or Britain would resort to force to prevent annexation.⁵³

It follows from the above that Brookes discredits the impact of Anglo-French protests against annexation. Instead, she suggests that by the fifties American influence in the islands had begun to decline. Consequently, the Hawaiian government from the beginning was ambivalent toward annexation, and eventually came to reconsider. Brookes does not credit the failure of annexation merely to this trend, however, and she is quick to add that it did not contribute to a rise in French prestige in the islands.⁵⁴

It is clear that both Kuykendall and Brookes see France as the major protagonist in Hawaiian affairs during the late forties and early fifties. But neither author claims that the French government was devoted to a policy of

⁵³Ibid., p. 212.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 217-218.

empire-building in the Pacific prior to the recognition of Hawaiian independence. In fact, although both review the entente between the government of Louis Philippe and the Catholic missionaries, they appear uncertain as to the overall purpose of French policy in the Pacific before 1843. The work of Harold Whitman Bradley ends this ambiguity.

According to Bradley, France under Louis Philippe was clearly committed to a program of expansion in the Pacific. He writes:

The first fruits of this policy were the seizure of the Marquesas Islands and the establishment of a protectorate over Tahiti, the latter at the risk of a breach of relations with Great Britain. How much more France coveted in the Pacific was uncertain. The energy of the French navy in that ocean and the willingness of the French government to identify the cause of Catholic missions with its own interests furnished ample reason for fear, shared by many American and English residents of the Hawaiian Islands, that French aggression would not be confined to the region south of the equator.⁵⁵

Certainly, the Laplace visit did little to allay these apprehensions. Indeed, Bradley asserts, the coercion imposed by Laplace spurred the American missionaries at Honolulu to send a memorial to Congress urging that the United States shield them from similar action in the future. To this appeal, the Van Buren administration was

⁵⁵Harold Whitman Bradley, The American Frontier in Hawaii: The Pioneers, 1789-1843 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1942), pp. 395-396.

mute. And although Tyler and Webster also hesitated, Bradley adds that the New Englander could not afford to ignore the American Missionary Board. He promised to make at least a nominal protest to France. So it seems that even before the recognition of Hawaii in 1842, the American government was aware of French imperialism in the Pacific. Yet, Webster's was but a token response to the plea of the missionaries, and Bradley concludes that Washington remained largely indifferent to affairs in Hawaii.⁵⁶

When in 1842, the Hawaiian government determined to obtain international recognition of its sovereignty, the Tyler administration decided to acknowledge the extent of the American involvement in Hawaii. Although Bradley agrees with Kuykendall that Webster was prompted by warnings of a possible British protectorate over the islands, he intimates that the missionary appeal of seventeen months earlier might have been a factor in the decision to formulate a Hawaiian policy. "It is interesting, although perhaps futile," Bradley writes, "to speculate as to whether the action of Tyler and Webster in December of 1842 was in any way influenced by a memory of Bingham's [like Dr. Judd, a New England missionary high in the circles of the Hawaiian government] recital of the aggression of Laplace or his

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 315-316.

emphasis upon the 'great importance of the entire independency of the Sandwich Islands' to the commercial interests of the United States."⁵⁷

If the repercussions of the Laplace affair did influence Webster and Tyler when they determined upon a policy for Hawaii, then, Bradley reasons, it would have been for the most part due to the Frenchman's reluctance to follow official policy. For although the Ministry of Marine favored the expansion of French influence in the mid-Pacific, he explains, there was nothing in Laplace's instructions which could have provided the basis for the occupation of Hawaii. According to Bradley, Laplace occupied Hawaii on his own initiative primarily because he refused to accede to an American dominance in the Pacific. It was this personal conviction that led Laplace in 1842 to urge his superiors in Paris to "protect" the Hawaiian government and to advise the Governor of California "to seek the protection which France could give but which it could not offer unsolicited."⁵⁸ This is convincing proof of Laplace's independence; for, as we have seen in the preceeding chapter, the French government entertained little real hope of acquiring California and even preferred it to fall, if fall it must, to the United States rather than Great Britain.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 316.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 317-318.

Regarding the immediate situation which prompted the Hawaiian government to strive for recognition in 1842, Bradley is more explicit than either Kuykendall or Brookes. With the Laplace experience all too fresh in their memory, the native government and its missionary advisors, Bradley suggests, were further aroused by news of French aggression elsewhere in the Pacific. He writes:

The occupation of the Marquesas Islands by France, in July of 1842, was an event which could be regarded only with alarm by friends of the Hawaiian government, for it was tangible evidence that France had colonial ambitions in the Pacific and an unpleasant reminder that relations between France and the Hawaiian government were less than cordial.⁵⁹

In the fall of 1842, Kamehameha commissioned his envoys to treat for recognition. The arrival of the French Captain Mallett in late 1842, Bradley continues, made an international guarantee of Hawaiian independence even more urgent. Many Hawaiians, as well as British and American residents, believed that had the situation been more propitious, Mallett would have seized the islands. Only because the king had already sent his representatives to Europe and the United States, Bradley adds, was Mallett dissuaded from adding Hawaii to the list of French possessions in the Pacific.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 418.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 420.

Like Kuykendall and Brookes, Bradley views Paulet's acquisition of the islands as an indication of British suspicion of France. Bradley notes that before the Hawaiian government consented to transfer the islands to Paulet, it contemplated the feasibility of a joint Franco-American protectorate. That ubiquitous Hawaiian of American origin, Dr. Judd, rejected this, for he feared the American government would refuse to join, thereby allowing France to dominate Hawaiian affairs.⁶¹ So the islands were surrendered to the British admiral and, Bradley adds, an appeal sent to President Tyler urging him to persuade Great Britain to disavow Paulet's actions.⁶²

Although the British disclaimed any intention of accepting Paulet's coup de main, they delayed ordering his withdrawal. Kuykendall and Brookes credit this hesitation to Aberdeen's determination to commit Guizot to recognition of Hawaiian independence. Bradley agrees, but adds that Kamehameha's envoys and Edward Everett, the American minister at London, supported British diplomacy. They feared that France, if given an opportunity, would seize the island kingdom. Thus, Bradley continues, they believed that the continuation of the British occupation pending the recognition

⁶¹Ibid., p. 431.

⁶²Ibid., p. 435.

of Hawaiian independence by France would be in the interest of the islands.⁶³ But Everett's belief in Britain's altruistic dedication to Hawaiian independence was not reflected in Washington.

In Bradley's opinion, Tyler refrained from joining Great Britain and France in a tripartite guarantee of Hawaiian independence because he viewed the relation of the United States to Hawaii to be vitally different from that of the other powers. Kuykendall and Brookes credit American abstinence from the accord to a tradition of avoiding treaty commitments to Old World powers. But Bradley sees more to Tyler's decision than merely diplomatic tradition. It must be remembered that Tyler distrusted European involvement in the New World; thus, it was only natural that he should be wary of French or British interest in any region where the American presence was predominant. According to Bradley, Tyler's declaration that the commercial value of Hawaii and its geographical tie to the United States would cause the American government to view with dissatisfaction a threat to Hawaiian sovereignty by another power, signified more than merely recognition of the independence of the island kingdom. In effect, he continues, it meant that the Monroe Doctrine had been extended to the mid-Pacific.⁶⁴

⁶³Ibid., p. 462.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 444-445.

Fundamental to the Monroe Doctrine is the presumption that not only is the United States predominant in the Western Hemisphere, but also it is the sole guardian of all free nations in that portion of the world. It is Bradley's view that because Tyler defined Hawaii as within the sphere of American influence, he could not consent to a joint guarantee of the island kingdom.

Jean Paul Faivre reaffirms much of Bradley's findings. But while Bradley stresses the impact of Tyler's extension of the Monroe Doctrine to Hawaii upon the Anglo-French decision to recognize Hawaiian sovereignty, Faivre emphasizes instead the European rivalry in the Pacific. According to Faivre, Guizot and Aberdeen viewed possible hostilities between their nations as too high a price to pay for the acquisition of further territory in the Pacific; the two thus consented to a mutual recognition of Hawaiian independence. Concurrently with this decision, Faivre continues, Tyler and Webster expanded the Monroe Doctrine to include Hawaii. He writes:

En 1842, la France paraît à la veille d'une puissante poussée d'expansion dans le Pacifique. . . Aux Hawaii, le Commandant Mallett, expédié des Marquesas avec l'Embuscade par Du Petit-Thouars, rappelle durement Kamehameha III. . . au respect des traités: on redoute la aussi une annexion française. Mais l'affaire Pritchard à Tahiti, la tentative du C.V. Lord Paulet pour placer Hawaii sous le protectorat anglais. . . provoquent le recul simultané de l'Angleterre et de la France. Guizot et Aberdeen jugent que les îles du Pacifique ne méritent pas de susciter un conflit international. . . Les deux puissances reconnaissent l'indépendance d'Hawaii cependant que le président Tyler et son secrétaire d'Etat Daniel Webster élargissent sur ce point la doctrine de Monroe.⁶⁵

On the whole, Faivre's work is disappointing. Not only is he overly dependent upon Bradley, and also Kuykendall, but his research is inferior to that of his predecessors.

Kuykendall, Brookes, and Bradley all employ French archival material to a greater degree than does Faivre. Still, Faivre is important, for he does support Bradley's interpretation of Tyler's declaration.

⁶⁵Jean Paul Faivre, L'Expansion Française dans le Pacifique de 1800 à 1842 (Paris: Nouvelle Editions Française, 1953), pp. 459-497. I have translated Faivre as follows:

In 1842, France appeared on the verge of a powerful expansionist drive in the Pacific. In Hawaii, Commandant Mallett, dispatched from the Marquesas by Du Petit-Thouars, forcibly reminded Kamehameha III. . . in regard to the treaties: French annexation was also feared. But the Pritchard affair in Tahiti, the attempt of C.V. Lord Paulet to place Hawaii under an English protectorate. . . provoked the simultaneous retreat of England and France. Guizot and Aberdeen decided that islands in the Pacific did not merit the instigation of an international conflict. . . The two powers recognized the independence of Hawaii; meanwhile, President Tyler and Daniel Webster, his Secretary of State, extended the Monroe Doctrine to that region.

But Bradley and Faivre are not alone in their interpretations of Tyler's Hawaiian policy. Sylvester K. Stevens also believes that in 1842 Hawaii came under the auspices of the United States through the Monroe Doctrine. Stevens maintains that Tyler saw the need to do more than merely announce his policy. He writes: "The transmission to diplomatic representatives in France and Great Britain of the views of the administration emphasized the international significance of Tyler's statement and recorded it as an American doctrine."⁶⁶ With his policy so proclaimed, Stevens adds, Tyler could never condone the Paulet affair. Echoing Bradley, Stevens explains the motive behind the American protest against the temporary cession of Hawaii: "Actually the United States had more to fear from the French, and might well have welcomed the Paulet seizure. . . . The American response to the news of the Paulet cession combined a bitter condemnation of British imperialism with a shrewd calculation of the importance of Hawaii to the United States."⁶⁷ The real significance of the protest against Paulet's occupation of Hawaii, Stevens asserts, is that it indicated that Tyler's proclamation was more than a mere statement of policy. "Fundamental principles of Tyler's

⁶⁶Sylvester K. Stevens, American Expansionism in Hawaii, 1842-1898 (Harrisburg: Archives Publishing Co. of Pennsylvania, 1945), p. 4.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 16.

doctrine had been affirmed," he writes. It was further "supplemented by the bilateral declaration of France and Great Britain binding the two chief possible opponents to a mutual check on each other."⁶⁸

After 1842, Stevens sees the United States as the prime benefactor of Hawaiian independence. He points out, for example, that Kamehameha had been forced to sign objectionable treaties with Great Britain and France. And although Ten Van Eyck, the American minister to Hawaii in the late forties, also demanded too much from the native government, Stevens notes that he was rebuked by Secretary Buchanan.⁶⁹ Similarly, he credits the American protest against the Dillon affair with persuading France to withdraw--no mention is made of any British influence. The Taylor administration informed the Hawaiian government that it would not only mediate, but make clear its disapproval. Stevens contends that unless the United States demonstrated its ability to protect Hawaii, the Dillon incident could have meant the permanent loss of the islands.⁷⁰

When difficulties again befell Franco-Hawaiian relations in 1851, Stevens maintains that the Whig Fillmore administration, which was ideologically opposed to annexation in the

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 20.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 50.

first place, reaffirmed Tyler's policy. He views Fillmore's rejection of annexation, as well as the failure of the attempt to link Hawaii with Cuba in a tripartite guarantee, as fortuitous. He writes:

The Fillmore policy succeeded in forestalling annexation and upheld the principles of the Tyler doctrine with success, if with little vigor. The failure of the proposal for a triple protectorate was fortunate indeed from the standpoint of its effect upon future American relations with the islands. . . . the forbearance of Washington in not pressing the opportunity for a foothold offered by the cession proposal combined to give a powerful urge toward better relations with the United States.⁷¹

Significantly, Stevens insists that President Pierce, though devoted to fulfilling the destiny of the United States, also upheld Tyler's Hawaiian doctrine. According to Stevens, Marcy's instructions to David Gregg, the new commissioner to Hawaii, "indicate again how fundamental were the principles established for Hawaii a decade earlier by Tyler." He notes that "the necessity for certain territorial acquisitions as a protection for the expanding interests of the nation became a cardinal point in the foreign policy of Pierce." But, he adds, "Hawaii stood in the same relationship to the United States as Cuba and the Antilles, which the United States would be 'pleased' to see 'independent of European powers.'"⁷²

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 56-57.

⁷²Ibid., p. 60.

Unlike Kuykendall and Brookes, Stevens asserts that much of the impetus behind the move towards annexation came not from the "Manifest Destiny" spirit, but rather from Anglo-French opposition to the possible outcome of the increased expansionist fervor. In his anxiety to forward the union of Hawaii with the United States, Gregg, Stevens notes, was confronted by "the undisguised opposition of the English and especially the French consul, to American control." When Marcy was informed to this, Stevens continues, he called Gregg's attention to "one of the most significant angles of the Hawaiian problem--the growing entente of France and Great Britain in opposition to further American territorial expansion." Because the Monroe Doctrine included Hawaii, a combined Anglo-French resistance to annexation violated the principle of an American sphere of influence. Stevens writes:

This rise of the ambitious Louis Napoleon in France, and the union of that power with Great Britain in the diplomacy of the Near East against Russia, paved the way for a closer Anglo-French cooperation in proposals for the throttling of American ambitions. There were objections equally to American attempts to control either Cuba or Hawaii. Marcy had placed them upon equal footing from the standpoint of the national interest of the United States.⁷³

By viewing Hawaii as within the realm of the Monroe Doctrine, Stevens can have no sympathy for the attempts of France and

⁷³Ibid., pp. 64-66.

Britain to protect their inferior stake in the islands.

In his assessment of the failure of annexation, Stevens again departs from Kuykendall. The latter, drawing from Van Alstyne and Golder, as well as from his own researches, concludes that the Anglo-French protest had an effect upon Washington. Stevens, on the other hand, maintains that annexation failed because of complications in Hawaii, and not because of external opposition. Stevens's argument is strengthened by his consideration, then rejection, of evidence to the contrary. He points out that Buchanan, then minister at London, distrusted Louis Napoleon. "'As a despot, he regards the existence and the rapid growth of the Republic of the United States as a standing censure upon his usurpation and tyranny,'" Stevens quotes Buchanan as writing. "'He is bold, wary and unscrupulous,'" Buchanan went on, "'knowing that our naval force is comparatively insignificant. . . it would be altogether in consistency with his character to attempt to humble us by one of those bold strokes in which he so much delights, and to declare that we shall not have the Sandwich Islands.'" Buchanan concluded, Stevens writes, that "while Cuba might be worth the risk of war, the Islands were certainly not so important as to justify the chance."⁷⁴ Stevens concludes, however, that

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 69.

Buchanan's trepidations and the formal Anglo-French protest had little impact upon Washington:

The question arises as to the effect known Anglo-French opposition and the advice of Buchanan may have had. It is questionable whether it entered into the problem at the time. The treaty was so undesirable as to preclude its consideration, even had no other factors been involved. Marcy was definite in his opinion that the demand for immediate statehood would not have been acceptable. Vigorous protest from England against annexation may have had some influence, but was not fundamental.⁷⁵

Perhaps it is an overstatement to claim that Kuykendall and Stevens differ. Both authors credit domestic problems in Hawaii, as well as a disagreeable treaty, as contributing to the failure of annexation. Still, Kuykendall believes that Anglo-French opposition to annexation was justified. Stevens disagrees, concluding only that "the time was not ripe for the annexation of Hawaii."⁷⁶ Because he maintains that Tyler's doctrine in effect extended the Monroe Doctrine to Hawaii, Stevens cannot accept the view that European protests against annexation were justified.

This perhaps is why Henry Blumenthal reverts to the Kuykendall viewpoint. Reviewing Tyler's Hawaiian policy, Blumenthal never mentions the American predominance in the islands. The Tyler administration, he writes, "disclaimed any desire to seek exclusive control over Hawaii." To

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 75.

⁷⁶Ibid.

avoid an international conflict, he adds, "Daniel Webster suggested that the commercial advantages the islands offered be made available to all powers."⁷⁷ Likewise, Blumenthal makes no mention of a reaffirmation of a "Tyler Doctrine" in response to the Dillon affair. He suggests that the United States hoped to avoid difficulties with Republican France. Washington "did little more, therefore, than speak up in favor of Hawaiian independence." In so doing, he adds, "the United States was wise--why should it complicate relations with Paris when Great Britain could be counted on to stop France in Hawaii?" Obviously, Blumenthal rejects the view that the island kingdom was under the protection of the Monroe Doctrine. Regarding the reaction of the Fillmore administration to renewed Franco-Hawaiian troubles and the offer of annexation, Blumenthal again omits any reference to a "Tyler Doctrine," and repeats what Kuykendall has written about the French reply to Webster's remonstrances--i.e., that American protests against French diplomacy insulted Paris, for it had no intention of acquiring Hawaiian territory.⁷⁸

With greater confidence than Kuykendall, Blumenthal maintains that the Anglo-French protest against annexation was both effective and warranted. Not only does he emphasize

⁷⁷Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, p. 61.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 62-63.

Buchanan's warning that Louis Napoleon might decide to resist annexation, but he also reports that Eugene de Sartiges, the French Foreign Minister, endeavored to convince Marcy that such a transfer would be resisted by France and Britain. This was no idle threat, Blumenthal adds, for "in the fall of 1854. . .combined Anglo-French forces moved into Hawaiian waters to protest against the impending annexation." Of the decision to drop annexation, Blumenthal writes:

The consideration which led to the decision against annexation at that time was the American government's realization that it could not defend the islands against a strong naval assault. Fearing that over expansion might weaken, if not humiliate, the United States, the Pierce administration respected, as in the case of Cuba, the realities of power politics.⁷⁹

Unfortunately, Blumenthal presents inadequate evidence to support this claim. He, as well as Van Alstyne and Golder, fail to demonstrate that France and Great Britain, occupied with the Crimean War, were able to resist annexation forcibly, or to establish that the Pierce administration heeded their protests.

Along these lines, it should be noted that three recent authors have avoided committing themselves to a specific explanation for the failure of annexation. In a revised edition of his biography of Pierce, Roy Franklin Nichols

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 63-64.

does suggest that foreign opposition to annexation did not go unnoticed. Nevertheless, he credits the failure of the project more to the death of Kamehameha than to anything else.⁸⁰ Marcy's biographer, Ivor D. Spencer, emphasizes that the annexation proposal itself was not sincere, and was only a stopgap measure to frustrate the rumored French aggression. He further asserts that March did not allow the official protests of Clarendon and the advice of Sartiges to deter him from pursuing an honorable Hawaiian policy.⁸¹ Merze Tate offers yet a third, an even more general, explanation for the failure of annexation. She agrees with Brookes that American prestige declined during the fifties, due primarily to the irresponsible behavior of American residents in Hawaii and the rumors of filibustering expeditions from California. These antics, she writes, "provided a basis for British and French contentions that Americans were hostile to the Hawaiian race." Tate also points to the death of Kamehameha III as a factor in Hawaii's decision to move from annexation to reciprocity.⁸²

⁸⁰Roy Franklin Nichols, Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), pp. 376, 396-397.

⁸¹Ivor D. Spencer, The Victor and the Spoils: A Life of William L. Marcy (Providence: Brown University Press, 1959), pp. 396-397.

⁸²Merze Tate, The United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom: A Political History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), pp. 18-19; Tate, Reciprocity or Annexation (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968), p. 30.

In summation, historians of Hawaii's role in Franco-American relations have clearly demonstrated that although French agents and consuls in the islands were indeed troublesome, neither Louis Philippe nor Louis Napoleon aspired to extend their Pacific realm to include the kingdom of the Kamehamehas. Since Foster and Callahan wrote, their assumption that Paris sanctioned such efforts as the Laplace and Tromelin interventions has been successfully challenged. Beginning with Blue, and including especially Kuykendall, Bradley, and Brookes, historians have searched French archives for evidence of any official desire to acquire a foothold in Hawaii, but none has been found. Although Bradley establishes that the July Monarchy pursued certain imperialistic ambitions in the Pacific, he does not include Hawaii. Still, it cannot be denied that the Laplace affair, as well as the French occupation of the Marquesas and Tahiti, had an impact upon Washington. Kuykendall, Bradley, Faivre, and Stevens have all asserted that the Tyler administration was not unaware of French activity in the Pacific. It is clear that American policy in Hawaii, as defined by Tyler in 1842, was at least partially founded upon a suspicion of French intentions. It is also clear that the activities of the French consuls Dillon and Perrin increased American concern for Hawaiian independence.

In his declaration, Tyler had asserted that in spite of the predominant American presence in Hawaii, the United States would not seek "exclusive control over the Hawaiian Government," but would be "content with its independent existence." He had warned, however, that the United States would make "a decided remonstrance against the adoption of an opposite policy by any other power." Upholding Tyler's warning, both the Taylor and Fillmore administrations had voiced to Paris their disapproval of the efforts of Dillon and Perrin. And although rumors of impending French aggression prompted Hawaii to offer annexation to the United States, the Fillmore administration refused to consider such a project, thereby reaffirming American dedication to Hawaiian independence.

But Fillmore's successor was not unsympathetic to the idea of expansion. In 1854, the eager American minister to Honolulu negotiated a treaty of annexation with the native Hawaiian government. Van Alstyne and Blumenthal assert that Anglo-French opposition was a prime factor in the decision of the Pierce administration to reject annexation. Their interpretation, however, is weak. Although they clarify Hawaii's position in the international affairs of the day, neither Van Alstyne nor Blumenthal establishes the degree of the commitment of Pierce and Marcy to annexation, or even that the Anglo-French protests were considered

in Washington. In contrast, the majority of historians have asserted that there were several obstacles, both American and Hawaiian in origin, that prevented annexation. Whether or not Tyler intended to extend the Monroe Doctrine to Hawaii, it is clear that an independent Hawaii served American interests, and that French opposition to the half-hearted annexation project had little real impact. So long as French representatives refrained from ambitious attempts to increase their country's influence in the islands, the United States remained content to respect Hawaiian independence.

Obviously, American expansionism provided much of the impetus behind Anglo-French efforts to prevent the possible extension of the United States to Hawaii. It was clear to London and Paris that the United States was rapidly becoming a major power, especially in the Pacific. Even in distant China the energy of American commercial expansion could not be ignored. But while France and England sought to protect their interests in Hawaii from American dominance, the three powers had basically the same interests in China and, for the most part, cooperated with each other. Throughout the period, however, Washington avoided any official commitment to the aims of France and Britain in China.

There has been little disagreement regarding China's role in the relations between Washington and Paris. Most

authors have maintained that American representatives in China, although advocates of a more vigorous policy, followed the official policy as defined in 1843 and kept in effect during the years before the American Civil War. Only one recent historian, John F. Cady, has challenged the prevalent assumption that while the United States government declined to join Britain and France in hostilities against the Chinese emperor, American officials in China cooperated closely with their European counterparts.

By 1843, it had become clear that the Chinese barrier against foreign trade had been breached. The "Opium War" had ended, with Great Britain being the first European power to receive extra-territorial rights by treaty. Realizing that once the first step had been taken China would be pressed for similar concessions by other powers, Daniel Webster determined to insure an American position in the scramble. On May 8, 1843, he instructed Caleb Cushing, the newly appointed commissioner to China, to negotiate with the emperor regarding American trading rights in China. Webster set a precedent that was to guide American diplomats in China for many years, and which prevented any real friction between the United States and France. The Secretary instructed Cushing to avoid involvement in any controversy which might arise between China and any European state. Furthermore, the minister was instructed not to express

any sentiment which could give another government cause for offense.⁸³

In his survey of American diplomacy in the Far East, Callahan presents what has become the standard interpretation of United States relations with France in China. He asserts that although Commodore Matthew C. Perry and Peter Parker, the American consul in China during the mid-fifties, attempted to involve the United States in a combined Anglo-French-American military front to coerce the emperor into a revision of the 1843 treaties, the administrations of both Pierce and Buchanan indicated their determination to avoid the use of force. The American representatives in China, Callahan notes, were instructed that although Washington sympathized with the aims of France and England, they must not involve the United States in hostilities.⁸⁴

In his survey of American diplomacy in the Orient, Foster supports Callahan's views. The former is more explicit, however, and his work is consequently more revealing than Callahan's. Foster reviews the relations of Parker's predecessor, Robert McLane, with the French minister, concluding that the two decided to "act in concert in bringing pressure to bear upon the Chinese

⁸³Sen. Ex. Doc. (457), 28th Cong., 2nd Sess., No. 138, pp. 1-5.

⁸⁴Callahan, American Relations in the Far East, pp. 99-100.

government to satisfy the existing grievances." And in so doing, he writes, "the American minister was conforming to the spirit of his instructions from the Secretary of State."⁸⁵

Noting that Parker visited with the Foreign Ministers of Britain and France before assuming his duties in China, Foster contributes much to our understanding of American policy in China. He maintains that Parker participated in a "free exchange of views as to the policy to be pursued in China by the three maritime powers, and an informal agreement [was] reached that there should be cooperation and harmony of action." But when Parker reached China and took up a scheme to acquire Formosa--plans were that France was to get Korea and Britain Chusan--Marcy rejected the idea and informed Parker that "it did not in any way harmonize with the peaceful policy at Washington."⁸⁶

In 1856, hostilities broke out between the united powers of France and Great Britain and the Chinese emperor. Foster maintains that William B. Reed, Parker's replacement, found no difficulty in cooperating with the two European powers. But there were limitations on Reed's freedom. Although Washington expressed its sympathy for the efforts

⁸⁵Foster, American Diplomacy in the Orient, p. 216.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 221, 227-229.

of France and Britain, Reed was authorized to cooperate with the two powers only in peaceful endeavors.⁸⁷

Subsequent historians have largely confirmed the Callahan-Foster viewpoint, adding little new information in the process. H.B. Morse notes that the French minister in China, the Comte de Courcy, delayed his cooperation with Parker. According to Morse, however, this was due to slow communications with Paris.⁸⁸ Tyler Dennett asserts that because Parker was somewhat obnoxious, his efforts toward cooperation offended the French and British ministers. Regrettably, Dennett does not pursue the point. He concludes that Washington rejected Parker's suggestions, and relations with France and Britain in China remained amiable.⁸⁹ In an essay on Lewis Cass, Buchanan's Secretary of State, Lewis Einstein notes that minister Reed "smarted under the inferiority of our position in stalking behind England and France, [and] suggested uniting with these powers in a hostile movement against the Chinese." In Einstein's view, Cass recognized the wisdom of such a move,

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 231, 235.

⁸⁸Hosea B. Morse, The International Relations of the Chinese Empire: The Period of Conflict, 1834-1860 (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1910), pp. 327-328.

⁸⁹Tyler Dennett, Americans in Eastern Asia: A Critical Study of the Policy of the United States with Reference to China, Japan, and Korea in the Nineteenth Century (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1922), pp. 281-291.

but believed that Congress would veto the idea.⁹⁰ Eldon Griffin takes a different approach to American involvement in China, but he reaffirms the view that relations between the United States and France there were amiable. "Had the American government acquired significant territorial holdings in the East," Griffin writes, "it would perhaps have been obliged clearly to unify its policy with that of England, France, and Russia." But, he adds, in so doing, the United States "could not have escaped the anxieties arising from internal conflicts of interest among those powers."⁹¹

Henry Blumenthal incorporates all of the above assessments into his examination of Franco-American relations, and is content to state that "ever since Webster's instruction to Caleb Cushing, . . . the United States did not wish 'to enter into controversies between China and any European state.'" He concludes that American neutrality during the Anglo-French war with China in 1856-1860 served as a reminder to London and Paris that Washington intended to pursue an independent policy with regard to China.⁹²

⁹⁰Lewis Einstein, "Lewis Cass," in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, ed. by Samuel F. Bemis, Vol. VI (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), p. 372.

⁹¹Eldon Griffin, Clippers and Consuls: American Consular and Commercial Relations with Eastern Asia, 1854-1860 (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1938), p. 177.

⁹²Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, pp. 66-67.

As mentioned earlier, Cady is the one author to challenge the Callahan-Foster thesis. In a 1954 work on French imperialism in the Far East, Cady maintains that France under Louis Napoleon pursued a militant policy in the Pacific. While Louis Philippe consented, out of necessity, to support French Catholics in the Far East, the new emperor was indebted to the Catholic hierarchy for its support of his coup d'etat. But the significance of Louis Napoleon's rule to French efforts in the Far East went beyond a more vigorous support of Catholic missions. Cady writes:

. . .clerical support rendered the Prince President vulnerable to clerical pressure on on behalf of the protection of missionary interests in the Far East. The other principal ingredient of Bonapartism, its commitment to re-establishment of nationalist prestige and empire as a condition of the survival of the dynasty, also contributed to the inevitable emergence of an imperialist adventure in the Far East.⁹³

Cady is quick to add, however, that the policy of Louis Napoleon confronted insurmountable obstacles in the Far East. France operated without a territorial base and substantial commercial interests; also, naval mobilization was difficult at best--all of which forced Paris to depend on Great Britain for diplomatic support.⁹⁴

⁹³John F. Cady, The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954), p. 87.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 137.

But Cady's real contribution to the historiography of Franco-American relations regarding China lies in his examination of the Parker mission. Cady revives Dennett's reference to Parker's belligerency and asserts that relations between the United States on one hand and Great Britain on the other suffered from mutual jealousy and suspicion. According to Cady, France hesitated to cooperate with Parker in his endeavor to convince the Chinese emperor to revise the 1843 treaties. Courcy had informed Paris that "nothing could be accomplished by making demands which the Chinese were perfectly able to spurn." Parker's attempts at peaceful treaty revision, Courcy added, would "fail and only add more grief and humiliation to the sad story of Western relations with China." Thus, Cady concludes- "by the fall of 1856, the fumbling effort of Washington to take over the diplomatic initiative in the Far East had spent itself." In subsequent preparations to force demands on China for treaty revision, Cady claims, "London and Paris understandably preferred to consult a deux, with little concern for Washington's views."⁹⁵

It is interesting, if not revealing, that only Cady has challenged the Callahan-Foster interpretation of Franco-American relations in the Far East. It seems that

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 157-159.

Cady is the only author to have searched extensively into both French and American sources. Blumenthal, who wrote after Cady, fails to incorporate the latter's findings into his work. The general assumption, then, is that the American government, from 1843 on, cooperated passively with France and Great Britain in the campaign to open China to Western exploitation. Cady has shown that France and Great Britain were unimpressed by the Parker mission and, because Washington would not condone a joint military effort, generally ignored the United States. But all of the authors, from Callahan forward, agree that Webster's instructions to Cushing formed the foundation of American diplomacy in China.

CHAPTER VI

THE CUBAN QUESTION

In the preceeding chapter, reference was made to Cuba as the other goal of American expansionists during the eighteen-fifties. In fact, such axioms of "Manifest Destiny" as propinquity and national security pointed more logically to the acquisition of Cuba rather than of Hawaii.¹ During the first half of the nineteenth-century, the United States had been content to allow Cuba to remain under Spanish dominion. In 1823, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams had reassured Madrid that the United States would never sanction any attempt to free Cuba from Spain. But Adams had also warned that the transfer of Cuba to either France or Great Britain would be an unacceptable threat to the security of the United States.² By 1850, however, American attitudes towards Cuba had changed. The island had become

¹Weinberg, Manifest Destiny, pp. 190-197.

²See Adams's instructions to Hugh Nelson, American minister at Madrid, April 28, 1823, Department of State: Instructions to United States Ministers, Vol. IX, pp. 183-243. (Unpublished microfilm).

politically unstable, as filibuster expeditions, originating from the United States, challenged Spanish authority and worked to foment revolution. To many observers, it seemed doubtful that the island would long remain under Spanish rule. Insulted by the Northern abolitionists and fearful that their political influence would decline, defenders of the Southern slavocracy were further haunted by the spectre of a collapse of Spanish rule in Cuba and the emergence of a Negro republic. Such a development, members of the Southern oligarchy reasoned, would provide a base for a general revolt of all black peoples held in bondage. To prevent this, many prominent Southerners advocated the annexation of Cuba by the United States. Their ranks were strengthened by the champions of "Manifest Destiny" doctrine from other parts of the country.³

In Europe, the Cuban question created a dilemma for France and Great Britain. Fearful lest Cuba be lost, Spain sought the assistance of those two powers in 1845. For six years, Paris and London demurred, demanding that Spain first enforce her laws prohibiting the slave trade. But in 1851, following the third and, although unsuccessful,

³See Basil Rauch, American Interest in Cuba, 1848-1855 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), pp. 57-66; and Amos A. Ettinger, The Mission to Spain of Pierre Soulé, 1853-1855 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), pp. 4-6.

largest filibuster expedition of Narciso Lopez, France and Britain reluctantly agreed to assist Spain. A year later, frigates of the French and British navies began to patrol Cuban waters in search of renewed filibustering activity.⁴ Hoping to commit the United States to the status quo in Cuba, France and Britain invited the administration of Millard Fillmore to participate in a joint guaranty over the island. In reply, Secretary of State Edward Everett asserted that although the United States did not covet the acquisition of the island, the condition of Cuba was an "American question." The proposed convention, Everett continued, "assumes that the United States have no other or greater interest in the question than France or England; whereas it is necessary only to cast one's eye on the map to see how remote are the relations of Europe, and how intimate those of the United States, with this island."⁵

The Cuban policy of the administration of Franklin K. Pierce presented further problems for Paris and London. Owing his election at least partially to a surge of expansionist sentiment stimulated by the disciples of "Young America," Pierce formally advocated the acquisition of Cuba

⁴Ettinger, Soulé, pp. 26-46.

⁵Sen. Ex. Doc. (660), 32nd Cong., 2nd Sess., No. 13, pp. 16-18.

in his inaugural address.⁶ Pierce, and his Secretary of State, William L. Marcy, at first delayed making a decision as to the means by which Cuba would be acquired. But early in 1854, an American merchant vessel, the Black Warrior, was seized in Havana by Spanish authorities without any real justification. The American minister in Madrid, Pierre Soulé, entered into negotiations with the Spanish government, demanding an indemnity for the outrage. Spain delayed, and, acting on Soulé's advice, Marcy authorized the minister to attempt to purchase Cuba, and if Madrid refused, to work to "detach" Cuba from Spain. Significantly, the Crimean War began in the same month. As months passed and no progress was made toward the purchase of Cuba, Marcy instructed his ministers at Madrid, Paris, and London to confer on the Cuban question.⁷ What has become known as the Ostend "Manifesto" contains a review of the Cuban problem including the Black Warrior crisis, an analysis of the purchase negotiations, and the following two paragraphs:

After we shall have offered Spain a price for Cuba far beyond its present value, and this shall be refused it will then be time to consider the question, does Cuba, in the possession of Spain, seriously endanger our internal peace and the existence of our cherished Union?

⁶Nichols, Pierce, pp. 329-330.

⁷Learned, "Marcy," in Bemis, Vol. VI, pp. 202-203.

Should this question be answered in the affirmative, then, by every law, human and divine, we shall be justified in wresting it from Spain if we possess the power; and this upon the very same principle that would justify an individual in tearing down the burning house of his neighbor if there were no other means of preventing the flames from destroying his own home.⁸

Although the conferring ministers did not conclude that Cuba in the possession of Spain did indeed endanger the "internal peace of the Union," the Ostend Manifesto could easily be interpreted as an endorsement of the use of force to acquire Cuba.

After a few days of deliberation, Marcy, in November of 1854, repudiated the recommendations of the Ostend dispatch and censured its principal author, Soulé. But the spirit of the Ostend Manifesto differed little from Marcy's instructions to Soulé in April, 1854. This apparent shift in the Cuban policy of the United States is vital to the historiography of the Franco-American relations with respect to Cuba. One group of historians explains the decision of the Pierce administration to disavow any intention of forcibly acquiring Cuba by pointing to the debilitating effect of the bitter domestic strife of the fifties. In their view, the Pierce administration, despite the devotion of Democratic expansionists and Southern slaveholders to the acquisition of Cuba, could not ignore the adamant opposition of abolitionists

⁸House Ex. Doc. (790), 33rd Cong., 2nd Sess., No. 93 pp. 127-132.

and free soilers to the extension of slavery. The uproar caused by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the accompanying congressional debate on the Kansas-Nebraska issue seriously weakened the nation and prevented any administration from acting with conviction in foreign affairs.

To claim that the acrimonious controversy over the Kansas-Nebraska Act prevented the United States from acquiring Cuba, even at a time when Britain and France were preoccupied with the Crimean War, is convincing, but of relatively little significance to Franco-American relations. Noting the impact upon European, and especially French, opinion of the antics of "Young America" and of the revelation of the Ostend Manifesto, a second group of historians claim that Anglo-French protests also influenced the Pierce administration to drop annexation. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to review the historiography of the Cuban question with the intention of determining the validity of the claim that the government of Louis Philippe, as an ally of Britain, but also as an ideological opponent of republicanism, contributed to the failure of the Pierce administration to annex Cuba.

In an early article on the Cuban question, Sidney Webster maintains that Anglo-French intervention in the island's affairs endangered American interests. Although

he wrote in 1893, Webster's study is more a memoir than an historical analysis derived from primary sources. He had been a member of the White House inner circle during the years of the Pierce administration, and his later writings are marred by a pronounced bias in favor of Secretary Marcy. According to Webster, Anglo-French naval activities around Cuba in 1852 and 1853 led Marcy to believe that Spain's dominion over the island was faltering. Because it was essential that the United States prevent Cuba from falling into the hands of France or England, Marcy and Pierce decided to attempt to purchase the island. But Marcy doubted that Spain would be willing to sell. The promptness with which France and Britain had sent their vessels to Cuba in 1852, Webster explains, led the Secretary to believe that Spain was obligated never to transfer the island to the United States. Nevertheless, in order to uphold the Cuban policy of his predecessor, Edward Everett, Marcy determined to make an attempt to buy Cuba.⁹ It is revealing of Webster's prejudice that no mention is made of the spirit of acquisitiveness that so pervaded the Pierce administration upon its entry into office.

Webster's predilection towards Marcy is further illustrated by his review of the Ostend conference. It is his

⁹Sidney Webster, "Mr. Marcy, the Cuban Question, and the Ostend Manifesto," Political Science Quarterly, VIII (1893), pp. 8-9.

view that Marcy instructed his ministers at Madrid, Paris, and London to confer so that the purposes of France and Britain with respect to Cuba could be reviewed. Nowhere is there any mention of an intention, or even a desire, on the part of Marcy or Pierce to acquire Cuba with force, if necessary. Thus, Webster sees no incongruity in Marcy's repudiation of the Ostend recommendation that Cuba could justifiably be wrested from Spain.¹⁰ This may in part be due to the unavailability of documents; still, one doubts whether Webster could ever have found fault with Marcy's diplomacy.

While Webster leaves us in some doubt as to the ultimate goal of the Pierce administration regarding Cuba, James Morton Callahan clearly states that it was to acquire Cuba, preferably by purchase, but by force, if necessary. Depending for the most part upon published documents and secondary contemporary accounts, Callahan asserts that Anglo-French naval intervention in Cuba in behalf of Spain constituted an open challenge to the Monroe Doctrine and, as such, warranted a forcible American reaction. Although Everett had reasserted the principle of an American sphere in his rejection of the tripartite guarantee of Cuban status, Callahan claims that this did not suffice to protect

¹⁰Ibid., p. 22.

American interests. Destiny pointed unmistakably to an eventual acquisition of Cuba by the United States; neither France nor Great Britain had a right to interfere. Callahan writes:

The feeling that nature had made two continents with separate interests led the American Government to reject the tripartite proposal. The United States had only a general interest in the fate of Turkey; why should England and France watch the fate of Cuba, which lay under America's right arm? In seventy-five years England, Spain and Portugal had lost vast colonies. The United States had become large and peaceful; it had needed territory and had purchased it. . . . If necessary, the United States might in the future acquire more territory.¹¹

Clearly, Callahan is guided by his belief that Britain and France sought to thwart the natural expansion of the United States and challenge American supremacy in the New World.

Like Webster, Callahan points to Anglo-French naval activities around Cuba as boding ill for the United States. "It was feared," he writes, "that both England and France had made some sort of arrangement to sustain Spanish dominion in Cuba." But while Webster believes that these maneuvers led Marcy merely to seek further information, and eventually to authorize the Ostend conference for the same purpose, Callahan asserts that the Pierce administration, encouraged

¹¹James Morton Callahan, Cuba and International Relations (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1899), p. 233. It is of note that Callahan also stresses the Guizot-Polk exchange of 1845 as a further example of the contrasting interests of Europe and America. See pp. 196-197.

by developments in Europe, dedicated itself to the acquisition of Cuba. The Crimean War had begun in the spring of 1854; furthermore, "France had recently erected an imperial throne--and some in the United States thought it was over the crater of a volcano which would keep the Emperor watching for his own safety." Callahan concludes with conviction that "a Continent was before us, and a bright future. Who could doubt that the Monroe Doctrine would be enforced?"¹² One wonders if the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine meant the conquest of Cuba.

Reviewing Soulé's mission to Spain, Callahan reaffirms his view that France, in alliance with Britain, conspired to prevent the United States from achieving its rightful destiny by the purchase of Cuba. Without mentioning Soulé's views on slavery, or his devotion to the "Young America" movement, Callahan notes that the minister complained to Marcy that Spain was under the influence of France. Soulé further asserted that since Louis Napoleon opposed the American acquisition of Cuba, he was shunned by the Spanish government. Callahan also accepts Soulé's claim that France and Britain interfered with the Black Warrior negotiations. Soulé, Callahan writes,

¹²Ibid., pp. 261-265.

said that the interference of England and France in the recent disturbances in Cuba "may have emboldened Spain" to experiment upon the patience of the United States, but that they could not influence us to deviate from a course of justice to United States citizens and of honor to our flag.¹³

Consistent with Callahan's assertion that the Anglo-French intervention in Cuban affairs merited a determined American response, and that the two powers had no right to meddle with the destiny of the United States in the New World, is his explanation of the failure of annexation. In his view, only domestic complications prevented Pierce from procuring Cuba for the United States. Marcy publicly renounced the recommendations of the Ostend Manifesto, not because Washington feared France and England would intervene if it was decided to eject Spain from Cuba, but rather, Callahan writes, because "the excitement which grew out of the Kansas-Nebraska legislation rendered it impossible to secure the annexation of Cuba by any war which the slavery expansionists might have inaugurated for that purpose."¹⁴

Granted, Callahan's interpretation has many deficiencies, not the least of which is his assumption that France and Great Britain without hesitation sent their naval forces to Cuba in order to frustrate the expansion of the United

¹³Ibid., pp. 268-269.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 274-278.

States. Also, he neglects to examine the foibles of Soule's character, and what impact, if any, his activities had upon Pierce's Cuban diplomacy. Still, Callahan has made a valuable contribution to the historiography of the Cuban question. He makes the significant observation that the Cuban policy of the Pierce administration underwent a transition between the inauguration and the fall of 1854. Although he neglects to analyze Marcy's instruction to Soule and the other conferring ministers, Callahan at least recognizes the contrast between the professed aims of the Pierce administration in 1853 and the rejection of the Ostend recommendation that the United States, if necessary, could rightfully eject Spain from Cuba. Beyond the obvious impact of the Kansas-Nebraska furor, Callahan suggests that another factor in this transition may have been Secretary Marcy's early artificial enthusiasm for the annexation of Cuba. "Marcy pretended," he writes, "to believe that the condition of the island was alarming--that England was endeavoring to control its future by inducing Spain to take steps toward the emancipation of the slaves, and that France had guaranteed Cuba to Spain on these conditions." According to Callahan, domestic problems, when combined with the termination of Marcy's dissembling to favor annexation, negated any chance that the United States would acquire Cuba in the

eighteen-fifties.¹⁵

Callahan's influence upon later historians has been substantial. John H. Latané, Elizabeth Brett White, and C.A. Duniway all repeat his assumption that Britain and France, with the intention of containing American expansionism, intervened enthusiastically in Cuba. Like Callahan, each of these historians views the Anglo-French patrolling as sufficiently serious to warrant Everett's rejection of the tripartite proposal and the revival of the Monroe Doctrine. According to Latané, for example, Everett's refusal to endorse the tripartite idea constituted a direct protest against the Anglo-French intrusion. Latané further echoes Callahan when he examines the diplomacy of Marcy. He notes that in Marcy's instruction to Soulé, the Secretary emphasized the danger presented to the United States by the presence of British and French naval forces in the waters around Cuba. In the interests of American security, Latané concludes, Marcy could not allow Cuba to fall to another power.¹⁶

Unlike Callahan and Latané, White intimates that the crisis in American-Cuban diplomacy caused by Anglo-French intervention did not emanate solely from the offensive

¹⁵Ibid., p. 274.

¹⁶John H. Latané, The United States and Latin America (Garden City: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1921), pp. 97-99.

nature of that intrusion. She points out that Everett's predecessor and close friend, Daniel Webster, realized the impassioned reaction that the combined naval operations would cause in the United States, and that this would harm Washington's relations with the intervening European powers. Webster, she writes, believed "that the difference between the government of American and that of European states is of a type to create mutual suspicion and aversion; and that knowledge of this creates in American a jealousy of European interference." Since the theme of her work is American opinion of France, White concludes that French intervention in this case, then, could not fail to produce some irritation, if not worse consequences."¹⁷ White adds that the Cuban affair was but one incident in a list of grievances causing the American people to look at France and her emperor with a critical and suspicious eye.¹⁸

In an essay on Webster's career as Secretary of State, Duniway summarizes Callahan's thesis regarding the Cuban policy of France and Great Britain. He writes:

¹⁷White, American Opinion of France, pp. 136-137.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 142.

Great Britain and France viewed with serious alarm the repetition of filibustering attacks upon Cuba, which the United States had not prevented. They ordered their squadrons in the West to repel by force any and all attempted invasions of Cuba. Notification that this had been done alarmed in turn the United States.¹⁹

None of the above authors even hint that France and Britain viewed the prosperous Cuban slave trade with disgust, or that such an abhorrence of human bondage at first delayed, then limited Anglo-French backing of Spanish rule in Cuba.

Foster Stearns first challenged Callahan's assumption that France and Britain plotted to frustrate American expansion by their intervention in Cuba. Writing in the same volume as Duniway, Stearns notes that the French and British ministers protested that Everett had over-reached to their naval intervention by his rejection of the tripartite plan and his assertion of the principle of an American sphere. He adds, however, that Everett could not be swayed by such protestations, despite their justification, for he had a larger purpose in mind than merely challenging the intervention. According to Stearns, Everett was seeking to formulate the fundamental principles of a foreign policy that future administrations could adopt. Thus, although Stearns intimates that the

¹⁹Duniway, "Webster," in Bemis, Vol. VI, p. 106.

United States had little reason to object to Anglo-French patrolling of Cuban waters--unfortunately, he does not mention why--he is of the opinion that consideration of this would not have softened Everett's pronouncement. Not only did the Monroe Doctrine have to be upheld, but it also had to be interpreted as applying to Cuba.²⁰ So although Stearns takes a different approach, his conclusion is identical to Callahan's.

To this point, Callahan's interpretation has remained basically unaltered. White is important in that she demonstrates that much of the crisis over Cuba was due to American suspicion of Europe, and especially the government of Louis Napoleon. But her findings are too vague to be of much use. Henry Barrett Learned demonstrates that this failure to reevaluate Callahan's findings can be credited to a lack of evidence. He is the first to make extensive use of both State Department archives and private correspondence. Through his research, Learned became aware of the significance of the period between April and November of 1854. On April 3, Marcy instructed Soulé, if necessary, to work "to detach" Cuba from Spain; at the end of November, Marcy repudiated the Ostend report, which incorporated just such a provision, and censured

²⁰Foster Stearns, "Edward Everett," in ibid., pp. 135-136.

Soulé. In order to explain this peculiar transition, Learned found it necessary to assess the relative impacts of domestic and foreign attitudes upon the Pierce administration. For that reason, his essay merits close attention.

In spite of the dissimilar philosophies of Fillmore and Pierce, Learned asserts that the new administration adopted Everett's Cuban policy. Everett's rejection of the tripartite proposal revived the Monroe Doctrine, since 1845 a Democratic article of faith, and "made a bold and clear assertion of the United States as the leading power of the Western World." What advocate of American expansionism could find fault with this? Learned is quick to add, however, that Everett's stand did not commit the Pierce administration to refrain from intervention in Cuba. The rejection of the tripartite guarantee, he writes, "left the problem of Cuba's destiny open to such arrangement as might be deemed desirable by any future administration." But Marcy and Pierce made no decision regarding Cuba for a year after the inauguration. Still, the Cuban question did not go unnoticed; Marcy on several occasions urged his ministers at Madrid, Paris, and London to discover, Learned writes, "any signs of a changing attitude on the part of the British, French, and Spanish governments towards the United States in

respect to our relations with Cuba." Significantly, he adds that Marcy, "aware that the Cuban question remained in an unsettled state, was open to suggestions."²¹

Learned is not the first to assert that the opinions of Soulé influenced Marcy. Callahan notes that Soulé's suspicion of the intentions of France and England regarding Cuba led Marcy to authorize the Ostend meeting. But Callahan accepts Soulé's analysis of the European scene without reservation. In his view, Soulé judged the motives and policies of the Great Powers accurately; hence, Marcy was correct to act upon Soulé's recommendations. While Learned agrees that Soulé's dispatches influenced Marcy, he adds that the minister's view of European affairs was clouded by a profound prejudice. Soulé held strong opinions regarding Cuba, slavery, and the empire of Louis Napoleon which should have precluded his appointment. A native Frenchman expelled from his home country during the eighteen-twenties for revolutionary activities, Soulé eventually settled in New Orleans. The mercurial Latin rose swiftly in Louisiana politics, and reached the United States Senate in 1847. Learned stresses that in the process, Soulé became a loyal advocate of the slavocracy, and concurrently, the acquisition of Cuba. His appointment

²¹Learned, "Marcy," in ibid., Vol. VI, pp. 184-185.

to the Madrid post was solely political.²²

The policy of watchful waiting ended in April of 1854. At that time, Learned writes, "the administration, acting through Marcy, advocated a definite change of policy. . .it was decided to recur to the project of trying to purchase Cuba from Spain." According to Learned, the affair of the Black Warrior had some influence in causing the shift of policy. That incident made it clear that for American relations with Cuba to stabilize, reform was necessary. But, he emphasizes that it is easy to exaggerate "the affair of the Black Warrior as being the essential and impelling factor in the situation."²³ Also prominent in the Secretary's mind at the time, Learned writes, "was the idea that England and France together might be involved in instigating Spanish insolence towards the United States." Not surprisingly, the man behind Marcy's thinking was Soulé. Just prior to the Black Warrior crisis, Learned points out, Soulé had intimated to Marcy that Spain, because of domestic problems, might be receptive to a transfer of Cuba to the United States. Accepting Soulé's recommendations, Marcy authorized the minister to negotiate for the purchase of Cuba.

²²Ibid., pp. 176-177.

²³Ibid., pp. 187-188.

But of far greater significance, Learned continues, Marcy also instructed Soulé that if Spain proved unreceptive to an offer, "'you will then direct your efforts to the next most desirable object, which is to detach that island from the Spanish dominion and from all dependence on any European power.'"²⁴ The ambiguity of the phrase "to detach" did not escape Learned; it is his view that it caused Soulé "to advance blunderingly ahead for several more months."²⁵ Unlike Callahan, and also Webster, both of whom find little fault in Marcy's diplomacy, Learned assigns to him the responsibility for what transpired at Ostend and Aix-la-Chapelle.

A further motive behind the authorization of the ministerial conference, according to Learned, was Marcy's distrust of France. Neglecting to explain why, Learned notes that Marcy doubted Britain would oppose the cession of Cuba to the United States, but was uncertain as to the Cuban policy of Louis Napoleon. With the hope of obtaining more information regarding French policy, Marcy suggested in his pre-conference instructions that "the French government, less responsible to public opinion than that of England, and unchecked by an effective parliamentary

²⁴Ibid., pp. 191-193.

²⁵Ibid., p. 203.

influence, had 'already indicated a tendency to intermeddle in the affairs of the American Government.'"²⁶ In this respect, Learned corroborates White; after the pathetic failure of the Second Republic, and the subsequent rise of Louis Napoleon, Americans viewed France as governed by an autocratic and reactionary emperor hostile to the cause of republicanism.

When the three ministers met at Ostend, their primary mission was to suggest alternative approaches to the Black Warrior negotiations--or so Marcy believed. Learned claims, however, that because of the ambiguity of the word "detach" in Marcy's April instructions to Soulé, the conferring ministers endorsed what appeared to be a forcible acquisition of Cuba.²⁷

The Ostend dispatch arrived in Washington on November 4, 1854. For nine days, Pierce and his cabinet considered its recommendations. According to Learned, their eventual decision amounted "to a sharp repudiation of an ideal which went back in origin to the notable letter of April 3, 1854," in which Marcy had instructed Soulé to seek "to detach" Cuba from Spain if the purchase negotiations failed. Regarding the portion of the report which could be construed as an endorsement of force, Marcy

²⁶Ibid., p. 202.

²⁷Ibid., p. 193.

"declined to admit any such inference, as wholly unwarranted." Marcy then informed Soulé, Learned adds, that conditions in Cuba presented little menace to the United States; existing problems could be eliminated through discreet negotiation.²⁸

The reasons behind the decision to disavow the Ostend Manifesto is a troublesome subject for historians. Learned asserts that the reply "looks very much like a mode of helping the Pierce administration out of confusion." Lacking a more precise interpretation, Learned offers the following:

Obviously, there was no man able or strong enough to guide this particular phase of our foreign affairs in a straight-forward and high-minded way. Politics, sectional strife, and animosity over the domestic issue of slavery were at the bottom of the mismanagement of the phase.

That such an explanation is disappointing, Learned concedes. The historian, he writes, "must admit himself mystified, regretful that there are no records of discussions in the Cabinet over the momentous days from November 4 to 13."²⁹ Despite his admission of a certain degree of ignorance, Learned believes that domestic opinion led Marcy and Pierce to reject the recommendations of the Ostend Manifesto.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 210-211.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 211, 216.

He found no solid evidence to support the claim that Anglo-French protests were a factor. In this respect, he is in basic agreement with Callahan.

In his authoritative biography of Pierce, Roy F. Nichols suggests an alternative explanation for the decision to disavow the Ostend Manifesto. The Pierce administration, Nichols explains, grossly misjudged the European attitude toward the United States in general and Cuba in particular. When the Crimean War began in 1854, it seemed to many Americans that the United States could acquire Cuba with impunity. Pierce and Marcy, Nichols continues, relied on this when they authorized Soulé, if Spain should refuse to sell, to work to "detach" Cuba from Spain. But the chance for success was dim. Nichols writes: "Neither Pierce nor his associates comprehended the reputation which the United States had acquired in the European chancellories, nor what strong containing forces these antagonists could bring to bear upon the so-called "Manifest Destiny" of the republic."³⁰ It is significant that Nichols fails to define the

³⁰Nichols, Pierce, p. 347. The first edition of Nichol's biography appeared in 1931. Although the author terms the second edition "completely revised," his interpretations with respect to the Cuban matter remained basically unaltered. A.A. Ettinger, whose work on the Soulé mission appeared in 1932, refers to Nichols often and reaches much the same conclusion.

"strong containing forces" that Britain and France could have used during the Crimean War to oppose the annexation of Cuba.

Nichols also points to other factors that contributed to the repudiation of the Ostend Manifesto and the censure of Soulé. In the first place, Marcy's devotion to the expansionist mission had never equalled Pierce's. "Pierce had started out under the influence of Young America," Nichols writes, "but Marcy and experience had gradually been toning him down."³¹ Thus, by the time the Ostend dispatch reached the President's desk, caution prevailed over ambition and campaign promises. According to Nichols, the failure to keep the Ostend recommendations secret also persuaded Marcy and Pierce to retreat. The most widely read American journal in Europe, the New York Herald, had "announced that the three conferees had advised the government to declare, in effect, 'that our safety demanded and our interests required we purchase Cuba at once.'"³² Furthermore, Nichols agrees with Learned that the conferences at Ostend and Aix-la-Chapelle aroused the Pierce administration to fear the possible consequences in Europe if the Ostend report were accepted.

³¹Ibid., p. 330.

³²Ibid., p. 360.

All this, when combined with the recent Democratic setback at the polls, led to the denial that the United States might forcibly acquire Cuba, and to the censure of Soulé, thereby removing a prime irritant in American-European relations.³³

At this point, a short review is in order. In spite of his many faults, Callahan isolates a development essential to an understanding of Franco-American relations regarding Cuba. He points out that the presence of French and British vessels in Cuban waters, followed by the tripartite proposal, made it necessary for Secretary Everett to either reject the proposition and assert the Monroe Doctrine, or to allow American predominance in the Western Hemisphere to wane. In Callahan's view, destiny had unmistakably allotted Cuba to the United States; only domestic turmoil prevented annexation during the Pierce administration. Fundamental to Callahan's interpretation is his assumption that at the first opportunity Britain and France eagerly rushed to aid Spanish rule in Cuba, intending also to thwart the natural expansion of the United States. None of the historians reviewed so far have challenged this assumption.

With the exception of Learned, historians have ignored

³³Ibid., p. 368.

the impact of Soulé upon the Cuban policies of both France and the United States. That the provocative Soulé might have offended the government of Louis Napoleon, causing Washington's Cuban policy to be viewed with suspicion, Callahan never suggests. Learned does make a point of Soulé's personality, but his greatest contribution was made in his emphasis of the ambiguity of the phrase "to detach" Cuba. Like Callahan, Learned offers only a general explanation of the rejection of the Ostend Manifesto--domestic turmoil negated the possibility that Cuba could be acquired at that time. But Learned also notes that the Cuban policy of France troubled Marcy, and that the Paris government was upset over the Ostend conference. Although Nichols also believes that domestic strife influenced the decision to postpone annexation, he further suggests that Anglo-French protests against annexation had an impact upon the Pierce administration.

One other aspect of Nichol's work deserves mention. He devotes much effort to demonstrate the influence of the "Young America" movement upon American foreign policy. He claims that Pierce's espousal of the precepts of "Young America" caused the President to misjudge the attitudes of France and Britain towards an American acquisition of Cuba. A.A. Ettinger expands this idea,

asserting that "Young America" did indeed have an impact upon the Cuban policy of the United States. In connection with this, Ettinger challenges Callahan's interpretation of the intervention of France and Great Britain in Cuban affairs.

Unlike Callahan, Ettinger claims that Anglo-French naval activities around Cuba were not intended to be a barrier against American expansion. Ettinger stresses that Spain's plea for Anglo-French assistance had been rejected repeatedly since 1845. Until the last spectacular Lopez expedition in 1851, London and Paris had insisted that before they would intervene, Spain must agree to end the slave trade in Cuba. Only with reluctance did the two nations finally consent to defend Spanish rule in Cuba. Not without some difficulty, London and Paris reached an accord, which, in the aftermath of the Lopez debacle, "led directly to Anglo-French intervention in American-Spanish affairs, to the extent of issuing orders to their respective navies, as well as attempting direct diplomatic negotiations with the United States, on behalf of Spain."³⁴

When France and Britain determined to seek American acceptance of a mutual guarantee of Cuban status, Secretary of State Webster, for reasons of health, delayed.

³⁴Ettinger, Soulé, pp. 26-33, 41.

After further delay, Webster's successor, Everett, issued his rejection of the plan, while incorporating Cuba in the Monroe Doctrine. Everett's policy statement, Ettinger asserts, most upset Sartiges, the French ambassador to the United States. Seeking reassurance, Sartiges went above Everett to the White House. But President Fillmore reaffirmed Everett's stand, further distressing the French envoy. Of this, Ettinger writes:

What the Frenchman most regretted was "the emphasis which President Fillmore placed on the necessity in which Spain may find itself of selling Cuba to the United States, and the declaration which he makes of the right, which the United States reserves to itself, of acquiring, by right of conquest, that island in the first war which arises between it and Spain."³⁵

If the Cuban policy of a Whig administration so disturbed the French, then there can be little doubt regarding the Paris reaction to President Pierce's predilection for expansion and his appointment of "Young America" men to diplomatic posts.

Nichols points out that Pierce misjudged the European attitude toward an American acquisition of Cuba. Ettinger agrees, emphasizing Soulé's appointment to Madrid as the outstanding example of Pierce's awkward handling of international affairs. Before his appointment, Soulé had

³⁵Ibid., pp. 81-83.

demonstrated by a provocative speech on the Senate floor that he lacked the essential quality of any diplomat--namely, that one's public views be palatable to his assigned government. In his oratory, the Louisiana Democrat argued for the annexation, by whatever means necessary, of Cuba. He further accused France and Britain of plotting to prevent its consummation. Naturally, the South and "Young America" rejoiced over Soulé's pronouncement. In Europe, however, opinion took a different course. Ettinger writes:

. . .abroad, these views met with a distinctly hostile reception. Soulé's attacks on Great Britain and France, both for their tripartite proposals and as to their colonizing methods, made him persona non grata in London and Paris, while his pronounced annexationist views, together with his aludation of Lopez, earned him the hatred of Madrid and Havana.³⁶

But in the eyes of Europe, Soulé's advocacy of annexation constituted only a part of his disagreeable nature. Ettinger also emphasizes his identification with George N. Sanders, spokesman for "Young America," as well as his devotion to republicanism everywhere. He writes:

Soulé's deep interest in the liberal movement in Europe, which had reached its zenith in the uprising of 1848, had been given full expression in his oratorical support of the French efforts of that year; and it was fostered by the subsequent visits to the United States of Louis Kossuth. . . .Soulé and Sanders. . .soon became the genii of the wing of the Democratic party

³⁶Ibid., p. 100.

which, in 1852, was to prove a thorn in the flesh of the President in his Cabinet and diplomatic appointments, and which was known as "Young America"; its ideal of American geographical boundaries being once defined as "East by sunrise, West by sunset, North by the Arctic Expedition, and South as far as we darn please!" This association, more perhaps than any other, colored Soulé's concepts, due to its dual doctrine of encouraging European republicanism and asserting the American expansionist policy of manifest destiny in Cuba.³⁷

It is little wonder, then, that Soulé's appointment elicited protest from foreign ministers stationed in Washington. But of all, Ettinger notes, "the French were the most voluble."³⁸

Both enroute to, and while at Madrid, Soulé demonstrated that his prejudice against European conservatism and his opinions regarding Cuba would continue unmitigated. It is Ettinger's belief that Soulé's various activities did much to set French opinion against the United States.³⁹ Although the Crimean War hindered the Anglo-French alliance from accomplishing all that it might have desired

³⁷Ibid., pp. 118-119.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 156-157.

³⁹One example of Soulé's conduct deserves notice. Before reaching Madrid, Soulé stopped in Paris. On his own initiative, he attempted to persuade the Foreign Minister that France should desert her British ally. Soulé failed, and Marcy officially disavowed his actions, but not for the last time. Ibid., pp. 181-187, 198-199.

to do for Spain, the two powers still found time to promote a settlement of the Black Warrior problem, and never did they abandon hope of preventing an American acquisition of Cuba. In agreement with Nichols, Ettinger asserts that Pierce and his advisors misjudged the European attitude toward the Cuban question. In spite of the numerous troubles in Europe, he writes, "it became clear that the three nations [France, Britain, and Spain] would present a united diplomatic front to the United States."⁴⁰

The increasing resentment felt by European governments against the antics of Soulé put Marcy in an untenable position. Like Learned, Ettinger notes the significance of the period between Marcy's instructions to Soulé and his receipt of the Ostend report. During that period, Marcy had not only become aware of an increasing hostility in Europe toward the United States, but he also had come to regret Soulé's appointment. The Ostend dispatch merely forced the Secretary into a decision. Relying on Marcy's support because of his instruction to "detach" Cuba, if necessary, Soulé "saw but one duty: the acquisition of Cuba, sans ethics, sans legality, sans expediency, sans anything." Ettinger further stresses the significance of Soulé's covering letter to the Ostend Manifesto. He

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 262-263.

writes:

Soulé was. . .the first to admit in official correspondence his frank willingness to fight to obtain Cuba, and he was quite convinced that a war with Spain would not draw Great Britain and France, for both would decline to interfere, the former because of Anglo-American trade, the latter on account of the Crimean War and European politics.⁴¹

But by November of 1854, Marcy had become immune to Soulé's appraisals of European politics, however accurate they may have been.

According to Ettinger, the repudiation of the "detach Cuba" clause of April is logical. As do Nichols and Learned, he points out that the expose by the Herald and the results of the November elections were two factors in the decision. But Ettinger continues, emphasizing also Marcy's disgust at Soulé's revolutionary activities in Spain and free-lance behavior. Furthermore, the denial of the Ostend Manifesto, as well as the censure of Soulé, "saved the United States from a conflict with an Anglo-French-Spanish alliance, the creation of which had been deterred by Spain's stubborn refusal to enforce her anti-slavery trade treaties, and by the Crimean War." While Nichols only intimates this, Ettinger is quite explicit.⁴²

In support of this last assertion, Ettinger notes

⁴¹Ibid., p. 369.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 381, 501.

the reaction of the French minister, Sartiges, to the repudiation of the Ostend Manifesto. He writes:

This brilliant representative of France saw clearly the fact that Pierce and Marcy were "brusquely abandoning their agents after having authorized them to proceed," and he clearly understood the implied doctrine of seizure, and Marcy's resultant embarrassment which led him to disavow Soulé.⁴³

Ettinger concludes that the decision to repudiate the Ostend Manifesto and to censure Soulé acted as a slave on Franco-American relations.

Basil Rauch repeats the emphasis given by Nichols and Ettinger to "Young America" as a significant factor in European-American relations regarding Cuba. But unlike Ettinger, Rauch believes that the boisterous movement had a definite impact upon American foreign policy even before the election of Pierce. The professed goals of "Young America" did not go unnoticed in Europe; hence, Rauch suggests that the clamor for the annexation of Cuba by Fillmore's opponents contributed to the Anglo-French idea to propose the tripartite plan. He writes:

The desire of American for Cuba was increasing while the popularity and strength of the administration and the Whig party waned. Plans for new filibuster expeditions became secondary only to the "Young America" fervor to secure in the 1852 election a new administration that would annex Cuba. Spain anxiously sought aid

⁴³Ibid., p. 396.

in preserving her island against the expansionist opponents of the Fillmore administration. Rebuffed in her latest attempts to ally France and Britain to her Cuban interest, she could only await the outcome of British and French efforts to commit the United States, through the anti-expansionist Fillmore administration, to a renunciation of future possession of the island.⁴⁴

When Everett rejected the Anglo-French proposal and reasserted American predominance in the Caribbean, Paris and London were disappointed; still, they remained firm in their determination to prevent an American acquisition of Cuba. During the height of the pre-inaugural debate on Cuba, Fillmore sounded a timely warning that, Rauch claims, became only too clear to Pierce and his advisors in late 1854. Fillmore, Rauch writes, "warned that annexation would. . . be a very hazardous measure. . . . The internationalism preached by Young American would combine all Europe against the United States."⁴⁵ But that such a realization did indeed lead Pierce and Marcy to repudiate the Ostend Manifesto, Rauch never quite claims. Instead, he believes that Marcy's use of the phrase "to detach" in his instructions to Soulé was an oversight, and that the rejection of the Ostend dispatch corrected that error.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Rauch, American Interest in Cuba, p. 173.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 239.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 281-283.

Although Nichols, Ettinger and Rauch all point to the influence of "Young America" upon European opinion, they fail to demonstrate conclusively that Anglo-French protests contributed to the repudiation of the Ostend Manifesto. Nichols and Ettinger mention that the Crimean War encouraged the Pierce administration, and especially Soulé, to seek to acquire Cuba, but, at the same time, they seem to assume that France and Britain could have acted forcibly in both the Caribbean and the Black Sea. On the one hand, they note the validity of Soulé's belief that the time was right for the United States to acquire Cuba, and on the other hand, they assert that Marcy and Pierce could not ignore the possibility of European intervention against annexation. This is a crucial weakness, and it has led one historian to revive Callahan's viewpoint that domestic strife defeated the expansionist yearnings of the Pierce administration.

In his study of divisive politics of the fifties, Allen Nevins maintains that the furor over the Kansas-Nebraska legislation precluded the annexation of Cuba. He asserts that the Pierce administration sought diversion from its domestic embarrassments in the Cuban venture, but adds that "an administration which blunders in home affairs is likely also to blunder in foreign affairs." Tracing the evolution of the Cuban policy of Pierce and Marcy,

Nevins asserts that it was an exercise in futility. He writes:

. . .in obedience to the rule that a precipitate temper always defeats itself, by its Kansas foray the Administration had gone far toward cancelling any Cuban venture. To millions of Northerners, slavery expansion on the breezy Western plains was bad enough without joining it to slavery expansion in the opulent Caribbean. . .after the fateful January of 1854, an aggressive movement southward would utterly have wrecked the Democratic Party in the North, and divided the country into two mutually hostile halves.⁴⁷

Nevins acknowledges that the activities of Soulé and "Young America," as well as the publication of the Ostend dispatch offended Europe, but he hastens to add that the hottest attacks came from the American freesoil press.⁴⁸

Agreeing with Nevins, Marcy's biographer, Ivor D. Spencer, sheds some light on the internal politics of the Pierce administration. Without Marcy's knowledge, Spencer notes, Pierce had indirectly hinted to Soulé during the Black Warrior negotiations "that he was about to abandon Soulé." But at the same time, Spencer adds, Marcy "was as impotent as before." When the Ostend dispatch reached Washington, Marcy finally regained control over the diplomacy of the Pierce administration. Spencer asserts

⁴⁷Allen Nevins, The Ordeal of the Union, Vol. II: A House Divided (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), pp. 347-348.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 362-363.

that the uproar caused by the publication of the Ostend recommendations had a profound influence on the Secretary. He writes:

Marcy was deeply perturbed. While there was no thought of accepting the advice of the "Manifesto," its terms were soon known in substance to the press, bringing the administration in the public eye to its lowest point of its term.

As a result, Spencer concludes, "when the Cabinet debated the recommendations from Ostend, . . . Marcy was able to win a complete victory." Through Marcy's efforts, the Ostend dispatch was repudiated and Soulé was censured.⁴⁹ Nowhere does Spencer claim that Anglo-French protests prompted Marcy to disavow the Ostend dispatch.

In contrast to Nevins and Spencer, Henry Blumenthal maintains that concern for foreign opinion played a most vital role in the Cuban diplomacy of the United States. His study is noteworthy in two ways: not only does he reaffirm Ettinger's assertion that Everett's pronouncement surprised especially the French, but he also places the entire Cuban episode within the rivalry of international politics. The tone of Everett's message, Blumenthal writes,

⁴⁹Spencer, The Victor and the Spoils, pp. 326-332.

. . .surprised French statesmen as much as the refusal to underwrite the perpetual neutrality of Cuba. They saw in this immoderate interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine an attempt to substitute for general principles of international law an exclusively American law.⁵⁰

As a result, France became determined to resist an American acquisition of Cuba.

When Marcy disavowed the Ostend dispatch, it was in recognition of French, and to some extent British, opposition to annexation. But preservation of the Cuban status quo was not without a price. Blumenthal writes:

Counting on time to remove European obstructions from the course of America's life-lines, Marcy yielded temporarily to superior force. But France and Britain had only won a Pyrrhic diplomatic victory, bought at the cost of America's growing mistrust of Europe.⁵¹

But what of the Crimean War? Blumenthal appears to assume that, in spite of their European distractions, France and Britain could have wielded a "superior force" to prevent the annexation of Cuba. He also ignores the domestic difficulties of the Pierce administration.

Clearly, the view that Anglo-French protests against the Ostend recommendation that the United States could justifiably "wrest" Cuba from Spain persuaded the Pierce

⁵⁰Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, p. 56.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 57.

administration to postpone annexation is extremely weak. Blumenthal is the only historian to claim that the threat of European military intervention forced Pierce and Marcy to reject the Ostend Manifesto and to repudiate Soulé. Nichols and Ettinger suggest that French and English opposition, stimulated by the activities of Soulé, may have been a factor in the decision to disavow all intention of acquiring Cuba, but they fail to document this. In spite of its seventy years of existence, Callahan's interpretation that the Kansas-Nebraska controversy so weakened the country as to preclude any ambitious schemes abroad is still convincing, if not revealing, to the student of Franco-American relations. And yet, in their attempts to discover the role played by France and Great Britain in the Cuban question, Learned, Nichols, Ettinger, and Rauch have shown that the Cuban diplomacy of the United States resulted in a deterioration of Franco-American relations. It cannot be denied that France--France and Louis Napoleon being one and the same--was deeply offended by the activities of "Young America." When the American government appointed men like Pierre Soulé to official posts abroad, and they then proceeded to advance the cause of international republicanism, there is little doubt that Franco-American relations

suffered. Unfortunately, by emphasizing the impact of the "Young America" spirit on Napoleon III's opinion of the United States, these historians are led to stress the role of France in Cuban affairs. Conspicuously absent in all of the authors reviewed is a detailed examination of the attitudes of Great Britain, without whom France could never effectively oppose American expansion. British policy with respect to Central America has been extensively and skillfully examined; a similar treatment of British policy with respect to Cuba during the fifties might shed much light upon Franco-American relations.

CHAPTER VII

FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH RESPECT TO SANTO DOMINGO AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Although Cuba dominated the diplomacy of France and the United States in Latin America during the eighteenth-fifties, a civil war in Santo Domingo and the question of a Central American canal route presented potential problems to policy-makers in Paris and Washington. It is true, however, that the Haitian-Dominican conflict, in spite of the vigorous competition among French, American, and British agents, did not become a crucial issue in Franco-American relations. It is also true that the quest for a canal route involved primarily England and the United States, Napoleon III remaining content that the British confront the republic. Nevertheless, these two issues are important to an understanding of Franco-American relations during the fifties. In both areas, France and the United States exhibited some of the same policy considerations that governed their actions in more spectacular controversies, such as Cuba and Texas. Moreover, it is precisely because the Haitian-Dominican

struggle and the search for a canal route did not fire the passions of American public opinion that these two issues cast light upon the nature of Franco-American diplomatic relations.

A former French and Spanish colony, Santo Domingo attracted international attention in 1843, when white property owners revolted against their black Haitian governors and established the Dominican Republic on the eastern half of the island. Immediately, the Haitians set out to regain their lost territory and to reassert their dominion over the rebels. Fearing defeat by the numerically superior Haitians, the Dominican government turned for aid to France, which had long been involved in the affairs of the island and had once before defended the white population against a black uprising. Although, as Dexter Perkins writes, "the Dominican pear was ripe for assistance to supplement her colonial empire. Nursing a détente with Great Britain, Guizot feared that London would object to the establishment of any form of French colony in Santo Domingo. Also, the French minister could not ignore a large Haitian debt to France, which probably would be lost if Paris were to aid the Dominican government. Significantly, the Polk administration, occupied with continental expansion, remained silent

toward Dominican affairs during the mid-forties.¹

Through five years of sporadic but bloody warfare the Dominican Republic held on. But in 1848, following a series of defeats, a panic-stricken Dominican Congress renewed its plea for aid. Desperate, the Dominicans consulted not only French, but British and American agents as well. No longer could the United States ignore developments in the troubled island; inevitably, Santo Domingo became an issue in Franco-American relations.²

The historiography of Franco-American relations with respect to Santo Domingo centers around the unusual tripartite agreement of 1850. By that accord, the United States, in apparent violation of its doctrine of two spheres, agreed to cooperate with France and Great Britain in an effort to mediate the bitter civil war. With the death in 1852 of its principal American advocate, Daniel Webster, the tripartite agreement ended in dismal failure. And with the inauguration of the Democratic Pierce in 1853, American policy in Santo Domingo appeared to shift from cooperation with France and Britain to a pursuit of

¹Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, p. 257; Sumner Welles, Naboth's Vineyard: The Dominican Republic, 1844-1924 (New York: Payson and Clarke, 1928), Vol. I, pp. 66-76.

²Charles Callan Tansill, The United States and Santo Domingo, 1793-1873 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1938), pp. 130-131; Welles, Naboth's Vineyard, I, p. 91.

nationalistic goals. During Pierce's administration, Secretary of State Marcy sent General William L. Cazneau to Santo Domingo to offer recognition in return for the cession of a potential coaling station at Samaná Bay. The idea of an American protectorate over the vulnerable nation also received passing consideration. French and British representatives, however, successfully persuaded the Dominicans to avoid any quid pro quo agreement with the United States, and the Cazneau mission ended in failure.

The student of Franco-American relations with respect to Santo Domingo is confronted with three basic problems. First, it is a primary concern for historians to determine what factors prompted the Whig administration of Millard Fillmore to ignore established American foreign policy and to allow European powers to intervene in the internal affairs of an American state. The paradox is even more striking when one considers that the same administration which participated in a joint intervention in Santo Domingo refused to do so in Cuba. The second problem concerns the Cazneau mission. Here, it is not so important for historians to determine what factors induced Pierce to seek an acquisition of territory in Santo Domingo--his expansionist predilections have been outlined elsewhere in this thesis--as to evaluate the impact of the

attempt upon Franco-American relations. And because of the successful Anglo-French effort to frustrate the Cazneau mission, the historian is also confronted with the problem of French policy in the island and its effect upon American plans.

In an early review of Dominican-American relations, Mary Treudley offers disappointingly few answers to these questions. On one point, however, she is clear. She emphasizes that the initial American involvement in Dominican affairs came as a direct result of suspicion of French aims. Treudley notes that as the fortunes of war turned against the Dominican Republic in 1848, the United States began to realize the vulnerability of the youthful nation to European intervention. In 1849, Secretary of State Clayton dispatched Benjamin E. Green as a special agent to the besieged country. Green's official mission was to determine the stability of the Dominican government in preparation for its recognition by the United States. Treudley asserts, however, that Green's real purpose was to prevent the establishment of a French protectorate over the Dominican Republic. She concludes that on the eve of the tripartite pact, distrust of the French involvement in Santo Domingo was a

determinant of American policy.³

There can be little doubt that the deep French involvement in Dominican affairs, when coupled with the crisis of the civil war, gave Washington cause for concern. As Treudley demonstrates, evidence of this abounds in State Department correspondence. But what influence did this have upon the American decision to enter into the tripartite agreement? On this point, Treudley is vague. She acknowledges that not only did participation in the agreement conflict with traditional American foreign policy, but also that Washington permitted France and Britain to take the initiative. According to Treudley, joint action seemed inevitable, for some manner of intervention was deemed necessary to restore peace to the troubled island. And if the racially embittered war could be ended, the threat that France would utilize the Dominican plight to acquire territorial concessions would be diminished. She writes:

The American government seems to have been earnest in its desire to bring about peace in Santo Domingo in order to restore prosperity to the island and to lessen the danger of European intervention. That England and France were as desirous as the United States of an amicable settlement was considered false by the American agent [Green]. Both nations

³Mary Treudley, The United States and Santo Domingo, 1789-1866 (Reprinted from The Journal of Race Development, Worcester, Mass., 1916), p. 236.

had more to gain by a continuance of disorder within the island.⁴

This is plausible, but quite weak. Fundamental to Treudley's interpretation is her assumption that unilateral American intervention would fail to end the Haitian-Dominican war. She merely states, without documentation, that the Fillmore administration regarded joint action as inevitable. And except for Green's dispatches, which alone are not sufficient, Treudley offers no evidence to support her claim that by consenting to the tripartite plan the United States hoped to lessen the danger of European involvement in Santo Domingo.

Treudley is even more sketchy regarding the policy of the Pierce administration toward Dominican affairs. At no time does she attempt to assess the degree in which Pierce aspired to acquire Dominican territory. Hence, her assertion that French and British opposition frustrated the expansionist schemes of the United States in Santo Domingo is, in spite of its validity, quite weak. She merely concludes that "the American government was quite as unwilling as the Dominican to incur the hostility of the great European powers and so allowed itself to be blustered out of its plans by threats of force."⁵

⁴Ibid., pp. 238-240.

⁵Ibid., pp. 244-252.

In his history of the Dominican Republic, Sumner Welles rectifies some of Treudley's shortcomings. Through extensive research into the Dominican archives, Welles offers a persuasive explanation for the decision of the Fillmore administration to enter into the tripartite pact.

Upon reading Treudley, one is led to the conclusion that the United States, suspicious of French intentions in Santo Domingo from the outset, agreed to the tripartite effort as a means of thwarting a possible French acquisition of the island. Although Welles agrees that rumors of French schemes stimulated American interest in Santo Domingo, he is quick to note that Washington received reassurance from Paris that the desires of its agents to acquire Dominican territory were unsanctioned. True, the Dominican Congress in 1849 passed a resolution requesting France to accept a protectorate. But to the dismay of the ambitious French representatives, Paris disavowed any intention of accepting the proposal.⁶ The Dominican government, hinting at the possibility of annexation to the United States, then turned to the newly arrived Green. Since he had no authority to accept such an offer, Green could give the Dominicans no encouragement. He told the

⁶Welles, Naboth's Vineyard, I, pp. 78-91.

Dominican government that the United States preferred the country to remain independent, urging that they seek American recognition by treaty. Disappointed, the Dominicans again turned to France. Learning of this, Green sought out the French consul, who informed him that the Paris government had refused to accept a protectorate over the Dominican Republic. Thus assured, Green proceeded to present his credentials and began negotiations for recognition.⁷

It should be noted here that later historians have confirmed Welles's claim that the United States had little reason to fear that France would acquire Dominican territory. Dexter Perkins, the preeminent student of the Monroe Doctrine, agrees with Welles that French agents in Santo Domingo negotiated with the Dominican government for concessions in the hope that Paris would consent. Perkins adds that there was even some annexationist propaganda in France itself. But, he writes, "at no time were the responsible authorities at the Quai d'Orsay anxious to add the Dominican Republic to the French colonial responsibilities."⁸

⁷Ibid., pp. 100-102.

⁸Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, p. 254. Other historians who have noted the reluctance of the French government to acquire Dominican territory are Tansill, United States and Santo Domingo, pp. 130-131, 133; Rayford W. Logan, The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti, 1776-1891 (Chapel Hill: University of North

According to Welles, the primary goal of American policy in Santo Domingo was to insure the independence of the Dominican Republic. It is his belief that this consideration prompted the Fillmore administration to accede to joint mediation. Because of the legitimate interests of France and Great Britain in Santo Domingo, Welles states, Secretary of State Webster concluded that the only means of securing Dominican independence lay in cooperating with the two in joint mediation.⁹ The tripartite agreement remained in force for two rather disappointing years. It is not without some regret that Welles notes the ending of that effort.

With Webster's death and the shifts in American diplomacy caused by the demands of domestic politics, Welles asserts that the honorable policy of "disinterested assistance" in Dominican affairs was cast aside. In its place, the Pierce administration sought to acquire Samaná Bay and even considered the annexation of the entire Dominican Republic. But due to the efforts of French and British representatives, this "Manifest

Carolina Press, 1941), pp. 245-246; Ludwell Lee Montague, Haiti and the United States, 1714-1938 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 57-58; Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, p. 49.

⁹Welles, Naboth's Vineyard, I, pp. 107-108.

Destiny" impulse of the United States suffered a setback.¹⁰ In contrast to his earlier work, Welles provides little documentation for this claim. Like Treudley, he fails to define the extent of Pierce's commitment to expansion in Santo Domingo. It is also significant that Welles later became the foremost advocate of the "Good Neighbor" principle, declaring that noninterference and equality should be the keystones of Washington's Latin American policy.¹¹ Writing on the policies of the Pierce administration in Santo Domingo, then, Welles uses the term "Manifest Destiny," with all of its imperialistic implications, to describe an undefined and undocumented yearning for Dominican territory. Subsequent authors have taken Welles to task on this issue, suggesting that in effect the Dominican policy of the Pierce administration differed little from that of the Fillmore administration.¹²

As a student of the Monroe Doctrine, Perkins takes a special interest in the Haitian-Dominican conflict. As

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 140-153.

¹¹While Under Secretary of State during the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Welles was a firm believer in mutual cooperation between the United States and the countries of Central and South America. See his article, "New Era in Pan-American Relations," Foreign Affairs, XV (April, 1937), pp. 448-449.

¹²See Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, pp. 272-274; Tansill, United States and Santo Domingo, pp. 135-136.

noted earlier, he agrees with Welles that although the plight of the Dominican Republic presented an opportunity to France for expansion, the French government refused to sanction such an endeavor. Perkins emphasizes, however, that American insistence that France respect the Monroe Doctrine did not contribute to the reluctance of the Guizot ministry to add part of all of the Dominican Republic to its colonial possessions. Rather, Guizot, fearful of alienating Great Britain and worried that the Haitians would refuse to pay their debt, instructed the French consul-général that France would not accept a protectorate. Neither in 1844 nor in 1849, Perkins concludes, did the attitudes of Washington have much influence on French policy in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.¹³

Like Welles, Perkins asserts that the Fillmore administration sought only to secure the independence of the Dominican Republic, and for that reason it did not object to the efforts of Britain and France to end the civil war. During the existence of the tripartite agreement, for example, the representatives of France and England, "by virtue of a threat of blockade. . . extracted from the Haitian potentate the promise of a

¹³Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, pp. 254-261.

truce for one year." Obviously, the Fillmore administration did not interpret the Monroe Doctrine as a blanket embargo on all European involvement in the New World. Perkins writes: "The complacency, therefore, with which the Whig administration not only looked on, but encouraged, the action of France and Great Britain in Santo Domingo, shows how little devoted it was, in any abstract sense, to the principles of 1823."¹⁴

But it can hardly come as a surprise that a Whig administration would be circumspect in its conduct of foreign affairs, and avoid the application of a general principle to a specific case. And although, as Perkins notes, the policies pursued by France and Great Britain in Santo Domingo were in clear violation of the Polk Doctrine, the Democratic Pierce administration did little about it. Granted, it did not adopt the cooperative spirit that prevailed during the Fillmore administration. Perkins states that the newly elected Pierce administration "proceeded to interest itself without delay in the question of Santo Domingo." Appointed early in 1854, Cazneau was instructed to offer recognition in return for Samaná Bay. The Dominican government eagerly accepted the offer and a draft treaty, providing for the cession of Samaná Bay, was drawn up. At this point, however, the

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 266-267.

French and British ministers in the island became alarmed and persuaded the Dominican president to revoke the provision dealing with the bay. The ministers reminded President Pedro Santana, Perkins writes, that France and Britain "had extended their protection to the Dominican government.. They could do so no longer if the republic were to subinfeudate itself to the United States." Although Cazneau warned the French and British representatives that they had violated the Monroe Doctrine, Perkins concludes that Washington accepted the defeat without protest and officially rebuked Cazneau.¹⁵

In their attitudes toward the application of the Monroe Doctrine to European intervention in Santo Domingo, then, Perkins sees little real difference between the Fillmore and Pierce administrations. Although one sought to bring about peace in the island through tripartite mediation, and the other sought to strengthen the Dominican Republic through a reciprocal treaty, neither objected to French and British involvement in the affairs of Santo Domingo.

There is one drawback, however, to the Perkins interpretation. Because no American government, from Polk to Pierce, ever voiced an objection to European

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 267-273.

intervention in Santo Domingo, he suggests that the Monroe Doctrine was ignored. Charles Callan Tansill disagrees. In his opinion, the American governments from 1849 to 1860 patiently sought to realize the ultimate goal of the Monroe Doctrine. He asserts:

From the American point of view the situation in the Caribbean was seriously involved. In accordance with the Monroe Doctrine it was the desire of the American Government constantly to diminish European control and steadily to magnify American influence in that region.¹⁶

According to Tansill, there was one constant that guided the relations of the United States with France in Santo Domingo--namely, the destiny of Samaná Bay. As he demonstrates from some original research in the diplomatic correspondence of Secretary Clayton, even the Whiggish Taylor administration harbored a desire to acquire Samaná Bay. Acting upon reports that the Dominican government had offered to cede the bay to the French in return for protection against the Haitians, Clayton sent new instructions to Green. "From the tenor of these instructions," Tansill writes, "it is evident that Green was not only entrusted with the duty of defeating foreign schemes for securing Samaná Bay but was further expected to prepare the Dominican Government to cede this very bay to the

¹⁶Tansill, United States and Santo Domingo, p. 135.

United States." But the Dominicans offered annexation instead, and Green, for the want of specific instructions on that subject, could only suggest negotiations in preparation for recognition. Whereupon the Dominican government, Tansill continues, addressed identical notes to the representatives of France, the United States, and Great Britain, requesting joint mediation. "The matter thus became an international affair," Tansill concludes, "and for the next two years these three powers exacted pressure upon the emperor of Haiti in favor of a conciliatory policy towards the Dominican Republic."¹⁷

With the abandonment, for various reasons, of the effort at joint mediation in 1852, Tansill asserts that the policies of France and the United States returned to competition for concessions. During the short tenure of Edward Everett as Secretary of State, and throughout the Pierce administration, rumors of French intrigues were rife. Tansill acknowledges that the French foreign office assured Minister William Rives "that the rumored occupation of Samaná Bay by a French squadron was nothing more than a fable from beginning to end." Still, the United States could not afford to ignore the French presence in Santo Domingo and, during the Pierce administration,

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 133-136.

resumed negotiations with the Dominican government for a reciprocal commercial treaty. Like Perkins, Tansill believes that Washington's attempt to enhance the American position in Santo Domingo through a favorable trade agreement with the Dominican government might have succeeded had it not aspired to acquire Samaná Bay. In any case, the opposition of the French and British representatives proved effective. In the aftermath of the furor over the Ostend Manifesto, along with the domestic unrest stirred by the Kansas-Nebraska debates, the Pierce administration, Tansill writes, had no desire "to adopt an aggressive policy that would again invite the sharp opposition of the European powers."¹⁸

In Tansill's view, the basic consideration that governed American policy in Santo Domingo from 1849 on did not betray the ideal of the Monroe Doctrine. The various administrations of the United States, in spite of repeated French denials of any intention of acquiring Dominican territory, distrusted the French involvement in that besieged country and consistently sought to lessen it. Suspicion that the Dominicans might cede Samaná Bay to the French in return for assistance led the Democratic Marcy to attempt to acquire that bay in return for

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 172-175, 202-204.

recognition of the Dominican Republic. Nevertheless, Tansill agrees with Perkins that the United States, unable to pursue an aggressive policy in Santo Domingo, had little real impact upon affairs in that island. Since the tripartite idea had originated in the Dominican Republic, the United States could do little else but agree. To be sure, the tripartite plan was perhaps less offensive to the sensibilities of the Whig Fillmore administration than to its successor. Yet, as Treudley and Welles have suggested, even the Democratic Pierce administration witnessed without objection the defeat of its Dominican policy by French and British agents. Perkins and Tansill, through their more extensive researches, substantiate this.

That even the expansionist Pierce administration had relatively little influence in Dominican affairs is reaffirmed by the works of three later historians. Writing on Haitian-American relations, Ludwell Lee Montague outlines the nature of Anglo-French opposition to the signing of a treaty between the United States and Santo Domingo in which Samaná Bay would be included:

Anglo-French propaganda to the effect that the United States would seize the country, thrust the natives aside, and enslave the blacks, created an uproar among the Dominicans; direct Anglo-French menaces persuaded their Congress

to reject not only the least [of Samaná Bay] but also a commercial treaty that would have embodied recognition.¹⁹

In a similar vein, Rayford W. Logan notes that even during the tripartite mediation Paris was convinced that the United States would seek to acquire territory in Santo Domingo, and for that reason hoped to commit the United States to a recognition of the independence of Haiti.²⁰ In his survey of Franco-American relations, Henry Blumenthal suggests another factor aside from Anglo-French opposition that contributed to the defeat of the Dominican policy of the Pierce administration. Had it not been for certain clauses in the proposed treaty involving racial discrimination inimical to the interests of the Dominicans, Blumenthal explains, the Pierce administration could have acquired Samaná Bay in 1854. Still, Blumenthal does acknowledge that throughout the fifties the United States and France continued to compete for Samaná Bay, while Great Britain maneuvered to prevent either from acquiring it.²¹

At first glance, it would appear that several interpretations of American policy toward the French involvement

¹⁹Montague, Haiti and the United States, p. 60.

²⁰Logan, Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti, pp. 260-261.

²¹Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, pp. 48-49.

in Santo Domingo have been offered. According to Treudley, the United States strongly suspected that France would capitalize upon the Haitian-Dominican conflict to supplement her colonial empire. In her view, Washington consented to participate in the tripartite pact in order to bring about peace in Santo Domingo, thereby lessening the danger of European intervention. Welles, however, notes that the United States had ample knowledge of the reluctance of the Paris government to pursue an aggressive policy in Santo Domingo. It is his belief that the United States, until 1853, was committed to the honorable policy of securing the independence of the Dominican Republic, and since France and Britain had legitimate interests in Dominican affairs, Webster rightly agreed to tripartite mediation. But both Treudley and Welles see a contrast between the Dominican policy of the Taylor and Fillmore administrations on one hand, and that of the Pierce administration on the other. They intimate that after 1853, Franco-American relations deteriorated over the Dominican issue. Yet, as Perkins demonstrates, neither the Taylor, the Fillmore, nor the Pierce administrations saw fit to apply the Monroe Doctrine to Santo Domingo. Tansill has pursued this point, asserting that, in effect, American Dominican policy from 1849 to 1860 was consistent. He interprets the American desire to

acquire Samaná Bay and to attain a commercial treaty with the Dominican Republic as a patient, restrained effort to lessen European influence in the island. That his policy received a setback in the mid-fifties was reflective of the inability of the United States to control affairs in Santo Domingo without a determined intervention. Even the militant Pierce administration accepted this, and voiced no objection to the defeat of its Dominican plans. As a result, Santo Domingo failed to become a serious issue in Franco-American relations.

Because Great Britain dominated the concerns of American policy-makers with respect to a Central American canal route, that issue also had little impact upon Franco-American relations. But this does not mean that France ignored developments in Central America. Several authors have stressed that both Guizot and Louis Napoleon were not averse to the possibility that France might play a role in the realization of such a canal.²² Lewis Einstein has demonstrated, however, that the United States had no reason to fear the prospect of French involvement in the quest for a canal route. France had assured

²²See Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, p. 159; Gerstle Mack, The Land Divided: A History of the Panama Canal and Other Isthmian Canal Projects. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944), pp. 178-179.

Washington, Einstein notes, that it had no designs on Central America. During the fifties, Paris remained true to this promise, totally refraining from any interference.²³

The one blemish on this record of noninvolvement occurred in 1855. One Félix Belly, a French journalist much intrigued by the idea of a canal route, at first verbally, then by a filibuster to Central America, challenged the Monroe Doctrine. But Dexter Perkins points out that the French government had nothing to do with M. Belly's extraordinary activities. The United States remained unconcerned; events in Central America did no harm to Franco-American relations.²⁴

The basic consideration behind French policy towards a Central American canal route is best explained by Henry Blumenthal. Because the taming of America's "Manifest Destiny" spirit had been an aim of French policy since the forties, France welcomed the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. The United States had acknowledged the legitimacy of the British presence in Central America; France could gain nothing by intervention, Blumenthal concludes.²⁵

²³Einstein, "Cass," in Bemis, Vol. VI, p. 353.

²⁴Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, pp. 245-247. For a review of Belly's activities, see Cyril Allen, "Félix Belly: Nicaraguan Canal Promoter," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXVII (February, 1957), pp. 46-59.

²⁵Blumenthal, A Reappraisal, p. 59. See also Hamilton, Taylor, Vol. II, p. 374.

One student of French interest in the Caribbean area, however, doubts whether Louis Napoleon ever abandoned his long-held desire to build a canal across Central America. W. Adolphe Roberts suggests that the French emperor resorted to an indirect means to fulfill his dream. According to Roberts, Napoleon's ill-fated adventure in Mexico during the sixties stemmed from a passion not only to control that country and establish a Catholic monarchy, but also to construct a canal at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the Nicaragua depression, or the Isthmus of Panama.²⁶ Roberts fails to fully substantiate this claim, but that Louis Napoleon's diplomacy in Mexico was not unrelated to his overall attitude towards the New World cannot be doubted.

Although neither Santo Domingo nor the Canal question became crucial to Franco-American relations, the policy of France in the Dominican Republic, as well as the sentiment of Louis Napoleon with respect to a Central American canal make it clear that the interests of France in the New World were at odds with the Monroe Doctrine. But Cuba was the focus of the "Manifest Destiny" doctrine during the fifties; neither the Fillmore nor the Pierce administrations viewed Anglo-French involvement in Santo Domingo and Central America as inimical to the interest of the United States.

²⁶W. Adolphe Roberts, The French in the West Indies (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1947), p. 253.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In any historiographical study, one can pursue two themes. The first concerns the research of the historians under discussion. Obviously, the writing of history is a cumulative process. Either previously untouched sources are used to support a new interpretation, or well-known sources are analyzed anew, causing the historian to challenge an established viewpoint. Gradually, historical knowledge is altered. This process, although somewhat unappealing to the layman, is of interest to any serious student of history, and is a worthy goal of historiographical study. But historiography can also be reviewed with another, perhaps more stimulating, goal in mind. By analyzing the historiography of a subject, it is often possible to shed new light on that subject. If while in the process of an historiographical analysis one isolates the interpretation of a single historian, or of a "school" of historians, one can demonstrate the weaknesses or emphasize the strengths of that particular viewpoint. This serves both to elucidate a confused subject, and to clear

the path for a new interpretation. Granted, these two branches of historiographical research are related. For the sake of clarity, however, it is convenient to separate them here.

With respect to source material, historians of Franco-American relations from 1828 to 1860 have made a fairly consistent advance away from the polemics of American expansion. The dependence of earlier historians on the American accusations of European intrigue in the New World as proof of a foreign threat to the United States, for example, has been successfully challenged. Adams, Smith, and Rives were the first to explore foreign archives, and as a result they establish that Aberdeen's "Diplomatic Act" made no provisions for Anglo-French military intervention in Texas. The historians of the Lone Star Republic have further shown that the Texas leadership purposely aroused fears of European designs to encourage support for annexation in the United States. Likewise, Nasatir and Graebner demonstrate that France had little serious desire to acquire California and preferred an American to a British acquisition of the province. As a result, the Guizot-Polk exchange has come into new focus. Merk redefines the meaning of Guizot's address and emphasizes the partisan background of Polk's declaration, reaffirming Reeves's earlier view that

Polk was plotting to acquire California and that his speech was a campaign document.

A similar process has taken place in the historiography of the Cuban and Hawaiian questions. In both cases, recent research into French archives proves that France, even though allied with Great Britain, had little intention of challenging the American acquisition of these insular domains. Although there is some speculation that Anglo-French protests persuaded the Pierce administration to postpone the annexation of Cuba and Hawaii, this is undocumented and fails to take into account the Crimean War. But perhaps it is easy to over-emphasize this process of historical evolution, for it is so basic to the principles of the writing of history. Also, it should be noted that one recent historian, Blumenthal, asserts that France and Britain forced the United States to accept the "realities of power politics" and drop the annexation of Cuba and Hawaii. Because this writer believes that a general frame of reference is essential for one to understand Franco-American relations from 1828 to 1860, the second goal of historiographical study is emphasized in this conclusion.

When trying to understand the diplomatic relations between two countries, one searches for constants, for predictable guidelines that influence policy decisions

and give some meaning to international affairs. To be sure, individual governments may react differently to a principle of foreign policy, but it cannot be denied that within the relations of any two powers there are forces, however elusive and subtle, that consistently influence their policies with respect to each other. In the case of France and the United States from 1828 to 1860, any attempt at generalization is somewhat hazardous. For, as the historians of the Cuban question have demonstrated, domestic concerns can at times severely limit alternatives abroad. Nevertheless, one historian has suggested that Franco-American relations during the three decades prior to the American Civil War can be viewed through the perspective of the Monroe Doctrine. It is the belief of Dexter Perkins that Monroe's 1823 declaration defined a basic conflict between France and the United States that progressively deepened until Napoleon III undertook his ill-fated venture into Mexico. He writes:

In the struggle of the nineteenth century between democracy and older governmental forms, between the spirit of the Old World and the New, the decisive point, in a sense, is the beginning of the decade of the sixties. In the period of sixty years since the beginning of the century the democratic spirit had won as yet only partial and indecisive victories in Europe. In England the middle classes had been admitted to power by the Reform Bill of 1832; but in France the rising democratic tide, which engulfed the

Orleans monarchy in 1848 and swept to power the republicans of that same year, soon ebbed again, and, using the mechanics of democracy to aid his rise to authority, Louis Napoleon, half genius, half scheming politician, established a semi-authoritarian regime which for some years at least expressed largely his own will and purpose. . . .The issue of the Civil War. . .gave opportunity for a European sovereign to offer a most serious challenge to the position of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. The intervention of the French in Mexico is an episode of the first significance in the clash between the system of the Old World and the system of the New.¹

Reviewing the historiography of Franco-American relations from 1828 to 1860, this writer believes that Perkins's emphasis on the ideological dichotomy between France and the United States, defined by Monroe in 1823 and made concrete by the expansionism of the forties and fifties, is justified.

Most Americans reacted enthusiastically to the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, interpreting them as inspired by the example of the American political system. But as Rhodes, White, Gazley, and Curti have shown, this initial euphoria soon vanished. The claims controversy dispelled any notion that the July Monarchy would seek to better relations with the United States, and the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon reaffirmed American disillusionment with the Second Republic. Relations between the prevalent

¹Perkins, History of the Monroe Doctrine, p. 108.

governments of France and the United States, as Blumenthal and Rémond suggest, were dominated by suspicion and ideological conflict.

But it was the expansion of the United States that made clear the conflict between the political sympathies of Louis Philippe and Louis Napoleon and the vigorous, self-confident republicanism of ante-bellum America. True, the historians of American continental expansion have dismissed the idea that contemporary fear of French intervention in the New World warranted a forcible response. Furthermore, Merk, Graebner, and Sellers, in taking issue with Perkins's interpretation of the Guizot-Polk exchange, have reaffirmed the earlier interpretation of Reeves that Polk's speech was intended primarily for domestic consumption. Still, it is clear that Guizot's desire to see a "balance of forces" in the New World conflicted, albeit symbolically, with Polk's use of the Monroe Doctrine to defend the American acquisition of California, Oregon, and Texas. And in spite of some ambiguity, caused no doubt by the domestic strife of the volatile fifties, the historians of the Hawaiian and Cuban questions also have demonstrated that the controversy over the annexation of these islands by the United States did contribute to the ideological gap between France and the United States.

This is especially true with regard to the Cuban question, where the activities of the "Young America" movement so irritated Louis Napoleon.

Significantly, historians have clearly shown that only where the Monroe Doctrine, whether formally in the case of Polk in 1845 and Everett in 1852, or informally in the case of Tyler in 1843, was applied to an area and used to complement American expansionism did the ideological conflict between France and the United States become apparent. In Santo Domingo, where both France and Great Britain worked successfully to counter American attempts to acquire Samaná Bay, the Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan administrations quietly accepted their defeat. Apparently, the destiny of the United States was not "manifest" in Santo Domingo; hence, the Monroe Doctrine was ignored.

The historiography of Franco-American relations from 1828 to 1860 is sorely deficient in one respect. Only Henry Blumenthal has devoted an entire monograph to the subject. But Blumenthal's work is disappointing. His evidence is often weak and it appears, especially with regard to Cuba, Hawaii, and Santo Domingo, that he ignores the findings of recent historians. The intent of his study is to dispel the belief that France and the United States enjoyed close ties, stemming from the Treaty of

Alliance of 1778 and interrupted only briefly during the Maximilian episode. Although he demonstrates that France and the United States were far from allies during the years 1828-1860, Blumenthal fails to accomplish much more. A good many of Perkins's findings have been challenged, clearing the path for a serious, detailed reassessment. Blumenthal fails to fulfill this need.

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